

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of my thesis is to examine and analyse the narrative in the four medieval Welsh prose texts, generally known as *The Four Branches of the Mabinogi*, comparing the results with an analysis of the narrative in a selection of eight tales from the Ulster Cycle in Irish literature. The selection of eight tales from the *Ulster Cycle* includes *Compert Con Culainn (The Birth of Cú Chulainn)*, *Aided Óenfir Aífe (The Death of Aífe's Only Son)*, *Tochmarc Emire (The Wooing of Emer)*, *Mesca Ulad (The Intoxication of the Ulstermen)*, *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó (The story of Mac Dathó's Pig)*, *Táin Bó Fraích (The Cattle Raid of Fróech)*, *Echtra Nerai (The Adventures of Nera)* and *Longes Mac n-Uislenn (The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu)*. My primary focus of interest lies in the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*, while the selected eight Irish tales are used as a literary 'control group', partly because the number of the texts that belong to the *Ulster Cycle* is so much bigger than the (preserved) number of tales belonging to the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*, and partly because much more is known about the literary traditions of medieval Ireland, the medieval Irish bardic schools and training, and the transmission of texts. It is usually presumed that the Welsh bardic schools and training were similar to those in Ireland, because the cultures and traditions of Wales and Ireland are similar in many ways; however, it is impossible to say with absolute certainty that the two models were identical, because no material that would prove or disprove this has been preserved.

The idea for this research project stemmed partly from my fascination with the tales of *The Mabinogion* and how easy some of them were to remember and summarize in considerable detail in comparison with others, and also in comparison with some of the other medieval tales, including some of the Irish tales that I had read; and partly from the realization of how much the enjoyment, understanding and the ability to remember a narrative depends on the structure and techniques that are used by the narrator. The issues of orality, literacy, text transmission and manipulation added further interest to the topic.

While the tales of the Ulster Cycle are agreed to be oral in origin, the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi* are neither fully oral folk tales nor completely arbitrary literary creations, but a wonderful mixture of both. It is as yet uncertain who the original author of the *Four Branches* was, or indeed if multiple authors were responsible for the creation of the texts. The same is true of the date of their composition. While the tales examined share some characteristics and certain narrative techniques, the way in which these narrative techniques are used in individual texts seems to make all the difference. It seems that the tales known as the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi* must have undergone a certain amount of editing by a skilful redactor in order to become as functional and coherent as they are in the form that they are known in today. The characteristics of the four texts imply that there was a single redactor with a considerable knowledge of the literary theory available to him, as well as the literary tradition of his time. He seems to have been aware of the power and pitfalls of certain narrative devices, and used this knowledge successfully. It is possible to suggest that he used certain words very meticulously, with a careful ear for the exact meaning and for the way in which a slight

nuance in the meaning of a single word could affect the reader's understanding of the narrative. The present thesis distinguishes between the original author, that is, the first person in the chain of all those who contributed to the texts, and the final redactor, the very last person in this chain, who is ultimately responsible for the texts as we know them today. It also allows the possibility of existence of several redactors or copyists who may or may not have been links in the chain of persons who shaped the texts through history. This is the reason why these different terms appear in the thesis, with no intention to confuse the reader or to imply that the original author and the final redactor were, indeed, one and the same person. The aim of my research is to establish the structural differences and similarities between the texts examined, the similarities and differences between some of the narrative techniques used in the texts, and to attempt to provide an insight into the mind of and the methods used by the redactor of the *Four Branches*.

My examination of the texts is based on the individual texts as preserved and presented in the selected editions that are available for study. One of the reasons for choosing the *Four Branches* only, as opposed to the entire collection of the eleven medieval Welsh tales that are included in the collection commonly (but erroneously¹) known as *The Mabinogion*, is the fact that these four texts obviously belong together in a way that a cycle would, sharing the same concluding formula that refers to the texts as

¹ The title 'Mabinogion' is in fact a misnomer stemming from a scribal error; the word, however, was adopted by Lady Charlotte Guest as the title for her translation of the Red Book texts, and it has been used ever since to denote the collection of eleven tales. For more details, see Sioned Davies, *Crefft y Cyfarwydd* (Caerdydd, 1995), 45-9; *The Mabinogion* (Oxford, 2007), ix-x; Ian Hughes, *Manawydan Uab Llyr: Trydedd Gaiac y Mabinogi*, Caerdydd, 2007, iv-ix.

‘branches’. Sioned Davies, in the introduction to her 2007 translation of *The Mabinogion*, states:

[o]f the eleven tales, it is clear that four of them form a distinct group, generally known as ‘The Four Branches of the *Mabinogi*’. These are the *mabinogi* proper, as it were, so called because each one ends with the same formula in both the White and the Red Books: ‘and so ends this branch of the Mabinogi’.²

The *Four Branches* also appear as a group in the same order in manuscript sources. The four tales seem to be parts of the same literary tradition, despite the fact that except for the character of Pryderi, all four tales do not share any obvious traits on the textual level. They do, however, share certain principles that unite them, such as themes of betrayal and alliance, insult, redress and honour, and the continuity of the dynasty. I briefly discuss these in Chapter IV. Because of all this, they seem to share a closer connection than any other native Welsh texts included in *The Mabinogion*. Sioned Davies writes that the eleven tales of *The Mabinogion*

were never conceived as an organic group, and are certainly not the work of a single author. Their roots lie in oral tradition, and they evolved over centuries before reaching their final written form; as such, they reflect a collaboration between the oral and literary culture, and give us an intriguing insight into the world of the traditional storyteller.³

The texts of the *Four Branches* suggest that while they may indeed not share the same original author,⁴ it is possible that they share the same final (ultimate) redactor who gave them their final form, as discussed in Chapters IV, V, VI, and VII. The same editing hand does not seem to be present in the remaining seven tales of *The Mabinogion*. Brynley Roberts draws attention to the thematic unity and consistence of attitude presented in the

² Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, Oxford, 2007, x.

³ Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, xi.

⁴ The debate regarding authorship has been a lively one, but the question remains open. For a brief literature review regarding the authorship debate, see Chapter II, Scholarship on the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*.

Four Branches, the traditional and native quality of the material, and the uniqueness of the four tales among other medieval Welsh texts.⁵

I exclude the Three Romances, *Peredur son of Efrog*, *Gereint son of Erbin* and *Owain, or the Lady of the Well*, from the discussion. They are part of the Arthurian tradition and have a close relationship (sharing some common background of composition) with the French verse romances *Ywain, Erec et Enide* and *Perceval* by Chrétien de Troyes and the medieval German verse romance *Parzival* by Wolfram von Eschenbach. Therefore, the Three Romances cannot be considered representative of native Welsh tradition. It is possible that the Welsh versions were adapted from the French tradition, which sets them apart from the *Four Branches*. Sioned Davies says,

[the Three Romances] should not be regarded as an organic group, the work of a single author. Indeed, they have not been copied as a group in the extant manuscripts; neither do they share a manuscript tradition.⁶

She also points out that the grouping into the Three Romances, as well as the naming, is misleading and not entirely appropriate, since they “do not lie comfortably within that genre”.⁷ As Eugène Vinaver stated in *The Rise of Romance*, romances are conceived in a different way:

[w]hen Chrétien de Troyes proudly contrasted his achievement as a narrator with the unskilled, rambling efforts of story-tellers who did not know how to construct a narrative out of ‘tales of adventure’, he made it clear that the purpose of poetic composition as he saw it was to give meaning and coherence to amorphous matter.⁸

⁵ Brynley Roberts, ‘From Traditional Tale to Literary Story: Middle Welsh Prose Narratives’, (ed.) L.A. Arrathoon, *Craft of Fiction*, Rochester, 1984, 228.

⁶ Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, xi.

⁷ Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, xi.

⁸ Eugène Vinaver, *The Rise of Romance* (Oxford, London, 1971), 68.

He argues that the complexity of the Arthurian romance is such that it is almost impossible to see a rational principle behind its form, with journeys through forests, quests being abandoned, and lack of explanation regarding the apparent vagaries of the knights-errant. He supports his argument by quoting Gaston Paris and Gustav Groeber, who regarded the narrative of the late romances as obscure and less than coherent, lacking a central theme, shape and substance. He further denounces the wandering and adventures of the knights in the forest as opposing the Aristotelian principles of the unity of composition.⁹ Indeed, the structure of the *Three Romances* is so different from that of the *Four Branches* that there can be no doubt that they belong to an entirely different tradition and are as such not comparable.

Also Arthurian in nature, *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy* is a conscious literary work. As Sioned Davies says:

Breuddwyd Rhonabwy yw'r unig chwedl yn y corpws y tybir nad yw'n rhan o gynhysgaeth draddodiadol y cyfarwyddiaid. Mae'n diweddu â pharagraff sydd yn honni na wyddai neb y chwedl heb lyfr.¹⁰

It was meant as a reading text, unlike the *Four Branches*. Its purpose appears to be different from that of the other tales of *The Mabinogion*; it appears to be that of critiquing and satirizing. Sioned Davies quotes Edgar Slotkin¹¹ to say that it is the *cyfarwyddiaid*

⁹ See Eugène Vinaver, *The Rise*, 69-71.

¹⁰ Sioned Davies, *Crefft*, 14.

The Dream of Rhonabwy is the only tale in the corpus that is presumed not to be part of the traditional inheritance of the story-tellers. It ends with a paragraph that asserts that nobody would know the tale without a book. (Translation mine.)

¹¹ Edgar Slotkin, 'The Fabula, Story and Text of Breuddwyd Rhonabwy', *CMCS* 18, 89-111.

and their serious way of treating that is the object of the satire.¹² The closing paragraph of the narrative,

[a] llyma yr achaws na wyr neb y breidwyt, na bard na chyfarwyd, heb lyuyr, o achaws y geniuer lliw a oed ar y me[i]rch, a hynny o amrauel liw odidawc ac ar yr aruev ac eu kyweirdebeu, ac ar y llenneu gwerthuawr a'r mein rinwedawl,¹³

seems to imply that this narrative was a literary composition. *The Dream of Rhonabwy* therefore presents a distinct lack of connection with the oral tradition, which is in sharp contrast with the texts of the *Four Branches*. Therefore, it is impossible to adequately compare *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy* with the *Four Branches* in terms of narrative structure and techniques as intended in the present study.

Culhwch ac Olwen, another Arthurian tale, is probably the oldest tale in the collection, oral in origin and full of stereotyped characters. Sioned Davies writes,

[i]ndeed, the story, with its rhetorical set-pieces and burlesque scenes, is a world apart from the restraint and control of the 'Four Branches', and is, without doubt, a tale to be performed – vocality is of its essence.¹⁴

As such, its narrative is too different to shed much light on the redactor and the editing process that is connected with the *Four Branches*. However, it is worthwhile examining the structure briefly to note any differences between a text that was so obviously intended for performance, and the *Four Branches*, which at the same time show a strong connection to the oral tradition and a great mastery of literary composition at the same time. Therefore, a basic sketch of the narrative structure of *Culhwch ac Olwen* is included in Appendix A.

¹² See Sioned Davies, *Crefft*, 15.

¹³ Melville Richards (ed.), *Breuddwyd Ronabwy* (Caerdydd, 1948), 21.

This is why no one knows the dream – neither poet nor storyteller – without a book, because of the number of colours on the horses, and the many unusual colours both on the armour and their trappings, and on the precious mantles and the magic stones. (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 226.)

¹⁴ Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, xii.

Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys is very different from the *Four Branches* in that it is very Latinized in style and pseudo-historical in context. Its earliest version can be found in *Brut y Brenhinedd*, Llanstephan I, one of the Welsh translations of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*.¹⁵ Like *Breuddwyd Macsen*, another a historical tale, its combination of 'pseudo-historical traditions with folk-tale motifs' and an intriguing interpretation of British history'¹⁶ sets it apart from the *Four Branches*, which do not offer any such historical insight. *Breuddwyd Macsen* is also a frame tale with multiple frames and transitions between dream and reality, so an analysis of its structure in terms of the plot line is impossible and does not yield comparable results. For these reasons, these tales are excluded from the present discussion.

The selection of the eight texts from the Ulster Cycle was somewhat more complicated. The choice of the Ulster Cycle was a relatively obvious one, this cycle being the one that shows Ireland divided into different (smaller) kingdoms (in contrast with the Cycle of Kings) and does not deal with the adventures of pagan gods (unlike the Mythological Cycle). Compared to the Finn Cycle, the Ulster Cycle seems more stylistically homogenous and deals with the same group of characters, which gives it more continuity. Due to Thurneysen's *Die irische Helden- und Königssage bis zum 17. Jahrhundert*,¹⁷ the *Ulster Cycle* is also probably the best known of all four cycles.

¹⁵ See Sioned Davies, *Crefft*, 9.

¹⁶ Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, xii.

¹⁷ Rudolf Thurneysen, *Die irische Helden- und Königssage bis zum 17. Jahrhundert*, Halle, 1921.

Eleanor Hull, in Appendix I to *The Cuchullinn Saga in Irish Literature*, lists 96¹⁸ tales that belong to the *Ulster Cycle*; not all of the tales included in the list have been preserved to the present day. Including all of the tales preserved would prove to be far too extensive for the purpose of this research project, as well as unbalanced, given the small number of the Welsh texts that have been preserved. In *Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland*,¹⁹ Proinsias Mac Cana relates a story of how medieval Irish tale lists came into existence:

[t]he story has it that the poet Urard mac Coise named all the titles in his repertoire so that king Domnall mac Muirchertaig might have his choice of them. [...] the suggestion has also been made that certain tales, or certain types of tales, were considered appropriate to particular occasions and circumstances. We have already remarked that story-telling was a feature of religious and social gatherings such as took place at wakes, weddings and seasonal festivals, and the Rees brothers have taken this a step further by surmising that, while in general the choice of tales was probably unrestricted, nevertheless particular places and events required the telling of suitable narratives: exemplary battle-tales before engaging in actual conflict, 'cattle-raids' before setting out on one, conception and birth tales at births, 'wooings' at weddings, and so on.²⁰

Such tale lists functioned as an aid to the *fili* and *senchaid*.²¹ Mac Cana edits two major lists of tales: List A²² and List B.²³ The lists are organized by themes and thus subdivide different tales, or their titles, into groups depending on the subject.²⁴ List A, which is better known of the two and which has a preface and a colophon, is preserved in the Book of Leinster (henceforth LL) 189 b (12th century) and TCD Ms. H 3. 17, col. 797 (16th century). It should contain 250 or 350 titles (250 main tales and 100 sub-tales, which

¹⁸ Eleanor Hull (ed.), *The Cuchullinn Saga in Irish Literature*, London, 1898, 300.

¹⁹ Proinsias Mac Cana, *Learned Tales of Medieval Ireland*, Dublin, 1980. The same story is given in Myles Dillon's *The Cycles of the Kings*, London, New York, 1946, 115.

²⁰ Proinsias Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, 24-5.

²¹ *Fili*, pl. *filid*, the professional story-teller in early medieval Ireland, and *senchaid*, pl. *senchaide*, a reciter of lore, historian. For a more detailed discussion on oral tradition and on the training and role of the *fili*, see Chapter II (Oral tradition).

²² Proinsias Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, 41-9.

²³ Proinsias Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, 51-65.

²⁴ See Proinsias Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, 30.

would together make 350 titles), but in fact, the version preserved in LL contains 178 titles, while the one preserved in TCD MS. H 3. 17 contains 182 titles, three of which do not occur in the list of LL. List B, preserved in RIA 23 N 10 page 29, Bodleian library Rawl. B 512, folio 109, British Library Harl. 5280, folio 47 (all from the 15th and 16th centuries), ‘is found embodied in the text entitled *Airec menman Uraid mac Coise*’.²⁵ There has been considerable debate as to the dating of the list, on grounds of historical persons and events, language and style, and linguistics in terms of the verbal system:²⁶ the general consensus is that List B probably dates from around the year 1000. Thurneysen states that both lists are copied from an older list that has not been preserved; he dates it to the 10th century.²⁷

The major tales, according to List A, are as follows:

Acus iss iatso na prímscéoil .i. Togla 7 tána7 tochmarca 7 catha 7 uatha 7 imrama 7 oitte 7 fessa [7] forbassa 7 echtrada et aithid 7 airggne. [...] And these are the major tales, viz. destructions, cattle-raids, wooings, battles, terrors, voyages, death-tales, feasts, sieges, adventures, elopements, and plunderings.²⁸

Thurneysen²⁹ also included the following tales as major tales: *tomadma* ‘eruptions [of lakes]’, *fisi* ‘visions’, *serca* ‘love stories’, *shuagid* ‘hostings’, and *tochomlada* ‘migrations’.

Among the criteria for choosing the Irish texts to be included in this research project was that of each tale fitting loosely into one of the categories of the major tales.

²⁵ Proinsias Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, 33.

²⁶ For details, see Proinsias Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, 33-40.

²⁷ Rudolf Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 21-24.

²⁸ Proinsias Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, 41.

²⁹ Rudolf Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 21-24.

Not all types of major tales, however, are typical of the Ulster Cycle. Some of them, such as for example *orgun* (pl. *oirgne*, ‘killing, murdering’), *togail* (pl. *togla*, ‘destruction’), *imram* (pl. *imrama*, ‘voyage’), *forbass* (pl. *forbassa*, ‘siege’), *uath* (pl. *uatha*, ‘terror’) and *fís* (pl. *físi*, ‘vision’) are not really obviously represented in the Ulster Cycle. At the same time, the difference between *togail* and *orgun* is not such that it would be impossible to combine the two aspects of destruction and plundering in one tale. Both *fessa* on the list given by Hull are lost. Some of the tales are classed as miscellaneous and do not fit exactly into any of the above categories, yet some of them can, depending on the point of view, be classed as one or more types. An excellent example of such a tale is *Mesca Ulad*, which is in a way a *togail* in terms of it describing a destruction of a house, and a feast since it is concerned with the feasts of Cú Chulainn and Findtan. *Orgun* can be closely connected with *táin*, and indeed *Táin Bó Fraích* contains both aspects in its second part. A number of tales are considered *remscéla*, or introductory tales, fore-tales, to the great epic *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, yet they are independent enough from the epic and present a large enough part of the Ulster Cycle to deserve being considered for the selection.

Other criteria on my list were: inclusion of the titles in the list given by Eleanor Hull; if possible, inclusion of the titles in one of the lists edited by Proinsias Mac Cana. However, *Aided Óenfir Aife* is not included in either of the lists; Mac Cana states that

[i]ndividual titles and indeed whole sections may have been omitted by one or other of the derivative lists, and one could compile a respectable collection of early tales which are not included in either, e.g. *Esnada Tige Buchet*, *Longes Chonaill Chuiric*, *Tochmarc Becfhola*, *Aided Aenfhir Aife*, *Echtra Chonlai*,

Comrac Liadaine ocus Chuirithir [...]. A couple of other early tales are included only in the newly compiled group of miscellaneous titles at the beginning of B.³⁰

Likewise, the title included in List A as *A[ithid] Derdrinne re macaib Uislenn*³¹ may or may not denote the tale known to us as *Longes mac n-Uislenn*. Vernam Hull makes a point of this, and emphasizes that allusions to the sons of Uisnech are dated to before the 10th century, and that the mention of the tragic fate of the sons of Uisnech in poetry must have been current around 896 AD.³² Therefore, the inclusion of this title in Mac Cana's list was not regarded as an essential criterion for including a tale in the present research.

The availability of a reasonably good edition (possibly a translation as well) was an important factor; the most important, however, was the fact that the narrative should form a relatively coherent story, despite the fact that some texts are amalgamations or combinations of fragments from different manuscript sources. The length of individual texts was a consideration, too: the Welsh texts are not uniform in length, yet not one of them is longer than nineteen manuscript pages in *Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch* (The White Book of Rhydderch).³³

After careful consideration of a number of texts, and many discussions with both of my supervisors, I chose one birth tale (*Compert Con Culainn*), one death tale (*Aided Óenfir Aife*), one adventure tale (*Echtra Nerai*), one cattle raid tale (*Táin Bó Fraích*), one tale of wooing (*Tochmarc Emire*), *Longes Mac n-Uislenn* instead of an elopement tale

³⁰ Proinsias Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, 66.

³¹ Proinsias Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, 46.

³² See Vernam Hull, *Longes mac n-Uislenn*, 32.

³³ *Pwyll*, the longest of the *Four Branches*, is just over eighteen and a half manuscript pages long in *Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch*.

(since it concerns an exile), *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó* instead of a plundering, and *Mesca Ulad* instead of a destruction tale (since it contains the destruction of an enclosure). The central tale of the Ulster Cycle, *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, was excluded from the present discussion due to its complex nature, which would demand a separate project of its own. *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, as an attempt at assimilation of a large number of smaller narrative units into an enormous narrative, is so complex and of such length that it would not compare successfully with the Welsh material. It demands a separate study with fewer limitations than a doctoral project imposes upon the material.

The second chapter of the present thesis outlines the existing scholarship, the editions of the texts used in this work, their manuscript sources, and the basics of oral transmission in medieval Ireland and Wales. The third chapter presents the methodological and theoretical background. The fourth chapter discusses the narrative structure of the texts discussed and presents the graphic representation of the structure of each text. The fifth chapter offers the analysis of certain narrative devices used in the texts and discusses the way these devices, their placement and use affect the flow of the narrative. The sixth chapter moves away from the level of the narrative structure and examines the variations in the *inquit formulae* used in the texts as an experimental way of testing the premise that the redactor of the *Four Branches* chose certain words carefully with the intention of conveying a very slight nuance of the meaning which could, if detected, change the modern reader's perspective of the narrative. The conclusion presents an attempt at outlining a possible profile of the redactor of the *Four Branches*. Appendix A offers a graphic representation of the narrative structure of *Culhwch ac*

Olwen. Appendix B is a brief note on the censorship of the *Four Branches* in some translations and adaptations.

For the purpose of this doctoral thesis, the following editions and translations of the selected texts have been used:

- Ifor Williams (ed.), *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi*. Cardiff, 1951 (first published in 1931). Sioned Davies (transl.), *The Mabinogion*, Oxford, 2007.
- A. G. Van Hamel (ed.), *Compert Con Culainn*. (Also contains editions of *Aided Óenfir Aife* and *Tochmarc Emire*). Dublin, 1968 (first published 1933). A translation of *Compert Con Culainn* into English is available in Jeffrey Gantz (transl.), *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, London, 1981 (pp. 130-33), however it is missing the end. A translation of *Aided Óenfir Aife* is available from the same source (pp. 147-52). Tom Peete Cross and Harris Clark Slover (eds.), ‘The wooing of Emer’, *Ancient Irish Tales*, New York, 1996, 153-71.
- Vernam Hull (ed. and transl.), *Longes Mac n-Uislenn: The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu*, London, 1949.
- J. Carmichael Watson (ed.), *Mesca Ulad*, Dublin, 1941. Jeffrey Gantz (trans.), *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, London 1981 (pp. 188-218).
- Wolfgang Meid (ed.), *Táin Bó Fraích*, Dublin 1967. A translation is available in Jeffrey Gantz (trans.), *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, London 1981 (pp. 113-26).
- Rudolf Thurneysen, *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*, Dublin 1985 (first published in 1935). A translation is available in Nora K. Chadwick (transl.), *An Early Irish Reader*, Cambridge, 1927.

- Kuno Meyer (ed. and transl.), ‘The Adventures of Nera: Echtra Nerai’, *Revue Celtique* 10 (1889), 212-228.

CHAPTER II: A BRIEF SURVEY OF SCHOLARLY VIEWS ON THE MATERIAL

II.1 The *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*: manuscript sources

The Mabinogion is a collection of eleven medieval prose tales in the Welsh language, which are considered the greatest achievement of medieval Welsh prose. The title itself is something of a misnomer and is actually a consequence of a scribal error³⁴ in the First Branch of the *Mabinogi*, most commonly known under its modern title, *Pwyll*; however, since Lady Charlotte Guest's translation of the tales (1838-49), the word *Mabinogion* has become accepted and established as a convenient umbrella term for the group of eleven tales.

To avoid misunderstanding and confusion, it needs to be pointed out that modern titles of the *Four Branches* (*Pwyll*, *Branwen*, *Manawydan* and *Math*) are used in this thesis for the sake of convenience in order to avoid the repetitive use of the lengthy phrase 'the First/Second/Third/Fourth Branch of the Mabinogi'. These modern titles do not appear in the original manuscripts and are products of a later, not medieval, scholarly tradition. It is especially important to keep this in mind later on in this thesis (chapter IV and onwards) when the titles given in manuscripts are discussed.

³⁴ Ac yuelly y teruyna y geing hon yma o'r Mabyynnogyon. 'And so ends this branch of the Mabinogion.' For more details, see Sioned Davies, *Mabinogion* (2007), pp. ix-x.

The tales are usually grouped in the following manner:

- *The Four Branches* (*Pwyll, Branwen, Manawydan, Math*), which are the subject of the present research;
- The Three Romances (*Iarlles y Ffynnawn, Gereint uab Erbyn, Peredur uab Efwrc*);
- Two Arthurian Tales (*Culhwch ac Olwen, Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*);
- Two pseudo-historical tales (*Breuddwyd Macsen, Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys*).

Only the manuscript sources relevant to the narratives examined in the present thesis are given below.

II.1.1 *Pwyll*

- *Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch* (NLW MS Peniarth 4), col. 1:1-38:11 (ca. 1350).
- *Llyfr Coch Hergest* (Jesus College Oxford MS 111), col. 710:16-726:42 (late 14th-early 15th century).

II.1.2 *Branwen*

- NLW MS Peniarth 6i (fragment) (ca. 1250).
- *Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch*, col. 38:12-61:19.
- *Llyfr Coch Hergest*, col. 726:43-739:33.

II.1.3 *Manawydan*

- NLW MS Peniarth 6ii (fragment).
- Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch, col. 61:20-81:19.
- Llyfr Coch Hergest, col. 739:35 - 751:12.

II.1.4 *Math*

- Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch, col. 81:20-111:16.
- Llyfr Coch Hergest, col. 751:13-769:6.

II. 2 A brief survey of scholarship of the Four Branches

The scholarship regarding the Four Branches could be roughly subdivided into the following groups:

- A. Scholars who have dealt with the origins of the tales (from the point of view of the international folk motif)

This school of thought is concerned with the origins of the tales, using the diachronic approach as opposed to studying the *Four Branches* as they are now. It is generally agreed that the material on which the *Four Branches* rely is much older than the tales themselves, and that the tales as preserved in the manuscripts are the result of a conscious literary redaction.

Kenneth Hurlstone Jackson suggests that the *Four Branches* are a rather clumsily combined patchwork of different folktale elements. According to Jackson,³⁵ the tales are combinations of various international folk motifs. In particular *Pwyll* and *Math* abound in them, while *Branwen* and *Manawydan* are considered poorer in this respect. Jackson suggests that the original tales may have been broken into parts and adulterated with later introductions of other motifs, which left them unintelligible. He also cites other tales, continental and otherwise, in which he sees the same motifs, or variations thereof, as proof of the widespread international motifs that are used in the *Four Branches*. He concludes that the *Four Branches* and *Culhwch ac Olwen* are, compared to the rest of the

³⁵ Kenneth Hurlstone Jackson, *The International Popular Tale and Early Welsh Tradition* (Cardiff, 1961), 91-5.

stories of *The Mabinogion*, of more interest to scholars regarding international popular tale motifs.

W. J. Gruffydd, in *Rhiannon: an Inquiry into the First and Third Branches of The Mabinogi*³⁶ and *Math vab Mathonwy*,³⁷ argued that the author combined fragments of tradition and mythology into a whole that would make sense.³⁸ Gruffydd compared the Welsh tales with the heroic tales of Ireland and concluded that the Welsh tales originally followed the same pattern giving the different stages in the life of a hero, namely that of birth, youthful exploits, exile/imprisonment, death and suchlike, depending on the topic of each individual tale. He concluded that the *Four Branches* recounted the story of Pryderi (as the only character that is present in all of the branches), with *Pwyll* giving the story of Pryderi's birth (parallel with the Irish tale-type *compert*), *Branwen* his boyhood deeds (*macgnímartha*), *Manawydan* his imprisonment (*indarba*, 'banishment'), and *Math* his death (*aided*).³⁹ Gruffydd and his account of the *Four Branches* as a heroic biography, however, did not adequately account for the gaps in Pryderi's life that are not described in any of the tales, nor for the fact that Pryderi is only a minor character in *Branwen*, *Manawydan* and *Math*, as opposed to the main character, which would be expected if these tales were indeed concerned with his life and death. He suggested that the original branches differed greatly from the form they had been preserved in, and looked for parallels in the Irish tradition; he discussed the tales in term of what they should be, not in

³⁶ W. J. Gruffydd, *Rhiannon: an Inquiry into the First and Third Branches of The Mabinogi*, Cardiff, 1953.

³⁷ W. J. Gruffydd, *Math vab Mathonwy: an Inquiry into the Origins and Development of the Fourth Branch of the Mabinogi with Text and a Translation*, Cardiff, 1928.

³⁸ See also A. O. H. Jarman, 'Mabinogi Branwen: Crynodeb o Ddadansoddiad W. J. Gruffydd', *Llên Cymru*, 4 (1956-57), 129-34.

³⁹ See W. J. Gruffydd, *Math vab Mathonwy*, 324-7.

terms of what they are, and on occasion manipulated the material to make it fit his argument and the Irish parallels he saw in it.⁴⁰

Some of Gruffydd's work, especially *Math vab Mathonwy*, has been criticized heavily by other scholars, including Jackson and Mac Cana.⁴¹ Patrick K. Ford also rejected Gruffydd's argument and suggested that the Four Branches should be viewed as a collection of related adventures in which each of the branches contained episodes or adventure and lore, and not as independent tales. Ford stresses the importance of understanding the redactor's treatment of the material and argues that viewing the branches as interconnected and consisting of episodes of adventure and lore would contribute to it.⁴² It has to be noted that Gruffydd's work contributed to a certain extent to the debate on the nature of the *Four Branches*, yet his arguments tend to be unreliable inasmuch as they are dependent on his imaginative insight or preconceived notions more than on textual evidence or facts.

Proinsias Mac Cana's *Branwen Daughter of Llŷr: a Study of the Irish Affinities and of the Composition of the Second Branch of the Mabinogi*⁴³ is also concerned with the origins of the tale and its Irish parallels. Mac Cana offered an analysis of the mythic background of the *Four Branches* and discussed its similarities and differences with the Irish material but his argument does not depend on preconceived notions of what

⁴⁰ W. J. Gruffydd, *Rhiannon*, 28, 30-31.

⁴¹ Compare, for example, Proinsias Mac Cana, *Branwen Daughter of Llŷr: a Study of the Irish Affinities and of the Composition of the Second Branch of the Mabinogi*, Cardiff, 1958, 114.

⁴² See Patrick K. Ford, *The Mabinogi and Other Medieval Welsh Tales*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, London, 1977, 2-4.

⁴³ Proinsias Mac Cana, *Branwen Daughter of Llŷr: a Study of the Irish Affinities and of the Composition of the Second Branch of the Mabinogi*, Cardiff, 1958.

Branwen must have been like originally. Mac Cana did not discuss the ways in which *Branwen* is different from other tales, but he singled the tale out by saying that *Branwen* seemed much later and less traditional.⁴⁴

Juliette Wood has contributed to the discussion with her article “The Calumniated Wife in Medieval Welsh literature”,⁴⁵ concentrating on Rhiannon and Branwen and the cultural milieu of the material. She touches on the topics of the treatment of women and foreigners, and contributes significantly to the gender-oriented debate mentioned later in this chapter.

Andrew Welsh has discussed the motif of a peaceweaver in ‘Branwen, Beowulf, and the Tragic Peaceweaver Tale’,⁴⁶ comparing the motif in *Branwen* with that in *Beowulf*. Welsh rejects the accepted motif of the Calumniated Wife in *Branwen* and favours that of the peaceweaver instead.

While the origins of the tales are by no means unimportant and may well hold the key to understanding certain aspects of the development of the tales, they are not crucial to the understanding of the tales as they are preserved now. They offer no view on the person who was ultimately responsible for the final form the tales are preserved in, and no valid view regarding the way this final form was given to the tales.

⁴⁴ Proinsias Mac Cana, *Branwen*, 189.

⁴⁵ Juliette Wood, “The Calumniated Wife in Medieval Welsh literature”, *CMCS* 10 (1985), 25-38.

⁴⁶ Andrew Welsh, “Branwen, Beowulf, and the Tragic Peaceweaver Tale”, *Viator: Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 22 (1991), 1-13.

B. Scholars who have concentrated on the mythological-historical point of view

Jackson associated Rhiannon with horses (horse goddess).⁴⁷ In the text, Rhiannon is undoubtedly associated with horses, but there is no textual proof that she was originally indeed a horse goddess like Eponā.

W. J. Gruffydd suggested that there was a link between *Pwyll* and *Manawydan* and the myth of Mabon and his mother Modron,⁴⁸ where he equated Pryderi with Mabon and Rhiannon with Modron. Eric P. Hamp⁴⁹ presents a theory that the word *mabinogi* in its original meaning relates to the material pertaining to Maonos.⁵⁰

Brynley Rees, in *Ceinciau'r Mabinogi*,⁵¹ also uses the mythological view to discuss the possible parallels within the tales. Following Dumézilian perspective, he discusses the three families (Pwyll's, Llŷr's and Dôn's) and the three parts of Wales (Deheubarth, Powys and Gwynedd), objecting to the biographical patterns for tales proposed by some scholars. The *Four Branches*, in his opinion, remain an enigma.⁵²

⁴⁷ Kenneth Hurlstone Jackson, *Tale*, 92.

⁴⁸ For a detailed discussion, see: W. J. Gruffydd, *Rhiannon*, 95-105.

⁴⁹ Eric P. Hamp, "Mabinogi", *THSC* (1974-1975), 243-9. See also: Eric P. Hamp, "Mabinogi and Archaism", *Celtica* 23 (1999), 96-110.

⁵⁰ For criticism of this sort of approach, see Jessica Hemming, 'Ancient Tradition or Authorial Invention? The "Mythological" Names in the Four Branches', in *Myth in Celtic Literature*, edited by Joseph Falaky Nagy, *CSANA Yearbook*, 6 (Dublin, 2007); Ronald Hutton, 'Medieval Welsh Literature and Pre-Christian Deities', *CMCS*, 61 (Summer 2011), 57-85.

⁵¹ Brynley Rees, *Ceinciau'r Mabinogi*, Llandysul, 1975, second edition 1999.

⁵² For reviews of Brynley Rees's book, see: Dewi Wyn Evans, in *Béaloideas*, 67 (1999), 229-31; Brynley F. Roberts, in *SC*, XXV (2001), 370-71; Ian Hughes, in *Llên Cymru*, 25 (2002), 169-72. Brynley Roberts draws attention to the fact that Rees's evidence tends to appear forced sometimes, while Ian Hughes finds the book difficult to follow and some parts of it confused and disorganized.

John Koch discusses the possible historical origins of the stories and their characters in his articles "A Window into the Welsh Iron Age: Manawydan, Mandubracios"⁵³ and "Brân, Brennos: an instance of Early Gallo-Brittonic history and mythology",⁵⁴ suggesting that the character of Manawydan is based on the historical figure of Mandubracios and Caesar's invasion of Britain (54 BC), while Bendigeidfran is linked to Brennos, the Gaulish leader from the 3rd century.

C. Scholars who have discussed the legal point of view

The legal point of view was discussed by T. P. Ellis in his exhaustive article "Legal references, terms and conceptions in the 'Mabinogion.'"⁵⁵ He suggested that the eleven texts of the *Mabinogion* contain references to ancient laws and customs, manners of the court, privileges, and that some of them could be could prove useful for the dating debate of either the ancient Welsh laws, or the stories. He drew attention to the inadequately defined difference between the terms for a king and a crowned king mentioned in *Pwyll* and *Branwen*; the problem of the titles such as lord, heir and prince; the division of the king's residence, which is not consistent throughout the texts; he compares the meanings of the term homage ('*gwrogaeth*') as it appears in the Laws and in the tales, noting alleged Norman-French influences in the *Mabinogion*. Ellis also listed

⁵³ John T. Koch, "A Welsh Window on the Iron Age: Manawydan, Mandubracios", *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 14 (1987), 17-52.

⁵⁴ John T. Koch, "Brân, Brennos: an instance of Early Gallo-Brittonic history and mythology", *Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies* 20, Winter 1990, 1-20.

⁵⁵ T. P. Ellis, "Legal references, terms and conceptions in the 'Mabinogion'", *Y Cymmrodor*, XXXIX, 1928, 86-148.

the references to the officers of the court, noting that not all of the officers of the court listed in the laws appear in the *Four Branches*, although some of them, such as the groom, the footholder, the physician and the porter do occur in some of the branches and also in some of the other tales of the *Mabinogion*. He discussed the references to bards, the hunting laws (where he again notices their apparent Norman-French origins), the military organization, the territorial units, social distinctions, the references to criminal law (*Manawydan* stands out here as containing important references to theft and the punishment thereof; *Branwen* and *Pwyll* contain references to insults and the redeeming of friendship, while *Math* refers to compensation for a wrong, or wrongs, committed against a person). The law of marriage is discussed especially with regards to *Pwyll* and *Branwen*; fosterage, a common Celtic custom, is touched upon. Ellis's article draws attention to the fact that fosterage is more extensively referenced in the tales than in the Laws⁵⁶ and the rules of precedence are considered very important indeed in the tales. This article is important for the evidence it brings, which adds to the debate on dating and certain stylistic features such as the 'local colouring' that they bring to the narratives.

Meinir Harris⁵⁷ discusses legal terms and concepts in the *Four Branches*; T. M. Charles-Edwards⁵⁸ examines the concepts of honour and status in some of the Welsh and Irish tales.

⁵⁶ See Ellis, "Legal references", 138.

⁵⁷ Meinir Harris, 'Dychwelyd at Gyfeiriadau, Termau a Chysyniadau Cyfreithiol yn y Mabinogi', *Y Traethodydd*, 158 (2003), 17-39.

⁵⁸ T. M. Charles-Edwards, 'Honour and Status in Some Irish and Welsh Prose Tales', *Ériu*, 29 (1978), 123-41.

James Fife contributes to this debate with his article “Legal aspects of the hunting-scene in *Pwyll*”,⁵⁹ where he links the character analysis of Pwyll as a rash, feckless and unthinking person with an analysis of the legal point of view concerning the hunting scene and the problem of friendship between Pwyll and Arawn. He argues that Pwyll’s behaviour was not unjustified considering that as the person who owned the land upon which the killing of the stag occurred, and at the same time the person who found the (killed) stag, he may have considered himself legally entitled to it, at least in part. Fife objects to the commonly accepted characterization of Pwyll and suggests that the laws supporting Arawn’s claim are from a different redaction than those that seem to be observed by Pwyll: Arawn seems to follow the Classical Venedotian redaction (i.e. *Llyfr Iorwerth*), while Pwyll (possibly ignorant of the laws in use in North Wales) seems to observe the laws in use in South Wales as described in *Cyfnernth* and *Blegywryd*. Fife thus establishes a possible connection between the North and the South in *Pwyll*, and adds an important contribution to the discussion of characterization in the *Four Branches*.

D. Scholars who have examined the dating of the *Four Branches*

Many speculations have been advanced on the subject of the dating of the *Four Branches*. Ifor Williams, basing his argument⁶⁰ on historical grounds (backed up with some linguistic data), dated the *Four Branches* around the year 1060. Gwyn Jones and

⁵⁹ James Fife, “Legal aspects of the hunting-scene in *Pwyll*”, *BBCS* XXXIX, 1992, 71-79.

⁶⁰ Ifor Williams, *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi*, Caerdydd, 1951, xli.

Thomas Jones⁶¹ were in agreement with his argument and set the date to be in the early part of the second half of the eleventh century.

Mac Cana, drawing a parallel with *Vita Cadoci*, suggested a date not earlier than 1100.⁶² This is somewhat contradictory to his proposal of Sulien (d. 1091) or his son Rhygyfarch (d. 1099) as the possible author.⁶³ A disagreement arose when Morgan Watkin⁶⁴ suggested a considerably later date, namely around the middle of the thirteenth century, based on the vocabulary. Saunders Lewis⁶⁵ examined possible Anglo-Norman influences and feudal customs in the texts and argued for a date between 1170 and 1190.

Thomas M. Charles-Edwards⁶⁶ considers the arguments of both Ifor Williams and Saunders Lewis to be less than convincing and put forward the suggestion that the composition would have occurred not much later than 1100, possibly between 1050 and 1120. Patrick Sims-Williams, writing on “The submission of Irish Kings in fact and fiction: Henry II, Bendigeidfran, and the dating of the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*”⁶⁷, concludes that the question of dating was very much an open one, setting the date anywhere between 1060 and 1200.

⁶¹ Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, *The Mabinogion*, London, 1949, ix.

⁶² Proinsias Mac Cana, *Branwen*, 158-9.

⁶³ Proinsias Mac Cana, *Branwen*, 180-87.

⁶⁴ Morgan Watkin, *La Civilisation Française dans le Mabinogion*, 279-290.

⁶⁵ Saunders Lewis, “Pwyll Pen Annwfn”, *Llên Cymru* IX (1966-70), 230-33; “Manawydan fab Llyr”, *Y Traethodydd* (1969) 137-42.

⁶⁶ Thomas M. Charles-Edwards, “The date of the Four Branches of the Mabinogi”, *THSC* (1970), 261-98.

⁶⁷ Patrick Sims-Williams, “The submission of Irish Kings in fact and fiction: Henry II, Bendigeidfran, and the dating of the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*”, *CMCS* 22 (Winter 1991), 31-61. (Revised version in *Irish Influence on Medieval Welsh Literature* (Oxford, 2011), Chapter 8.)

William Parker⁶⁸ dates the *Four Branches* to the period between c. 1164 and 1197, based on the political connotations of the mention of the four *cantref*s of Dyfed in *Pwyll* and *Math*. More recently, in 2009, Nikolai Tolstoy⁶⁹ proposed different dates for individual branches between 1018 and 1024, based on the provenance of the texts, contemporary Welsh politics and historical events that he assumed would have occurred during the author's life.

The same year that Tolstoy advanced his argument for the dating of the Four Branches, Andrew Breeze extended and elaborated on his suggestion that Princess Gwenddoleu was the author of the Four Branches by providing a more exact date. Breeze first suggested a possible date by ascribing the authorship to Princess Gwenddoleu ferch Gruffydd (c. 1097–1136) in his book *Medieval Welsh Literature*⁷⁰ and then further elaborated on his argument in *The Origins of the Four Branches of the Mabinogi*⁷¹ in which he narrowed down the date of composition to around 1128 or slightly later. In his latest book on the subject, Breeze gives a date between 1120 and 1136, with some internal evidence pointing to the date proposed previously.⁷² Breeze's argument is based on ascribing the authorship to Princess Gwenddoleu, certain geographical characteristics (knowledge of both Ireland and certain parts of Wales), possible knowledge of politics, government, a possible connection in terms of vocabulary that he notices between the work of Princess Gwenddoleu's nephew Hywel ab Owain Gwynedd and the *Four*

⁶⁸ William Parker, 'Gwynedd, Ceredigion and the Political Geography of the Mabinogi', *The National Library of Wales Journal*, 32 (2002), 365-96.

⁶⁹ Nikolai Tolstoy, *The Oldest British Prose Literature: The Compilation of the Four Branches of the Mabinogi*, Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter, 2009. For a detailed discussion on dating, see 25-82.

⁷⁰ Andrew Breeze, *Medieval Welsh Literature*, Dublin, 1997, 63-95.

⁷¹ Andrew Breeze, *The Origins of the Four Branches of the Mabinogi*, Leominster, 2009.

⁷² Andrew Breeze, *The Origins of the Four Branches of the Mabinogi*, 93.

Branches, and on certain elements which he deems more typical of a female author, such as for example a greater interest in the character of Arawn's wife in *Pwyll* than in the character of Pwyll himself, the interest in children, marriage and women as expressed in *Branwen* and *Math*, and Rhiannon's beauty and behaviour in *Manawydan*, which Breeze considers as indicative of the female authorship. It has to be pointed out that Breeze and his arguments have been heavily criticized.⁷³ Breeze seems to operate on the principle of motivated reasoning, which allows him to rationalize and support his theory on unreliable and insufficient information. There is indeed not sufficient textual proof provided to support Breeze's arguments, which means that the question of date (or authorship) is, despite his contributions, still unresolved.

E. Scholars who have concerned themselves with the author of the *Four Branches*

Several of the scholars who have contributed to the debate on dating also discussed the authorship of the *Four Branches*. Ifor Williams, operating again on historical grounds, argued that it was a man from Dyfed who authored the Four Branches. He also ascribed

the whole conflation to the final redactor, whom he describes as 'editor, composer, or compiler'.⁷⁴

Jackson assumed there were several compilers, while Mac Cana favoured the idea of a single compiler and mentioned the possibility of clerical/monastic authorship.⁷⁵ This

⁷³ See for example Dafydd Johnston's critique in CMCS 34 (1997), p. 123; William Parker, 'Gwynedd, Ceredigion and the Political Geography of the Mabinogi', *The National Library of Wales Journal*, 32 (2002), 365-96; Tolstoy, *Oldest British Prose*, 475-78; Diana Luft, review of Andrew Breeze, *The Origin of the Four Branches of the Mabinogi*, *Taliesin* 140 (Summer 2010) and *Celtic Studies Association Newsletter*, 27.2 (2010), 9-12; Simon Rodway, 'The Where, Who, When and Why of Medieval Welsh Prose Texts: Some Methodological Considerations', *Studia Celtica*, 41 (2007), 47-89.

⁷⁴ Proinsias Mac Cana, *The Mabinogi*, 43.

argument is based on the parallels with Irish monastic literature, not on internal textual evidence.

Mac Cana tentatively attributed the authorship of the *Four Branches* to Rhygyfarch ap Sulien or Sulien himself,⁷⁶ based on the conclusion that *Branwen* was written around the same time as *Vita Davidi* by Rhygyfarch. Mac Cana noted an Irish influence in *Vita Davidi* and since the proof that Rhygyfarch himself spent any time at all in Ireland was lacking, he suggested that his father Sulien, who spent some years in Ireland, was the source of the Irish hagiographical material and regards both men as possible authors of the *Four Branches*. W. J. Gruffydd speculated the author was a monk or some other cleric. T.M. Charles Edwards⁷⁷ also argued for a single author for the *Four Branches*.

Saunders Lewis, in his article on *Manawydan*, argued that the author may have been of ecclesiastical background because of his use of the word *uchot* in *Manawydan*, arguing that it is a calque on Latin *supra*.⁷⁸ He also mentioned the hierarchy of church officials that appear in *Manawydan* as being suggestive that the author was a person connected with religion/the church, and he saw a biblical parallel in Manawydan's lament at the beginning of *Manawydan*.

⁷⁵ For more details, see Mac Cana, *The Mabinogion*, 44.

⁷⁶ Proinsias Mac Cana, *Branwen*, 182-86.

⁷⁷ Thomas M. Charles-Edwards, "The date of the Four Branches of the Mabinogi", *THSC* (1970), 298.

⁷⁸ Saunders Lewis, "Manawydan fab Llŷr", *Meistri'r Canrifoedd*, Caerdydd, 1973, 19-25.

J. K. Bollard, in his MA thesis,⁷⁹ draws attention to the fact that the phrase ‘prouedigaeth y gorff’ in *Pwyll* is of ecclesiastical origin, but may have come into common usage and does not necessarily prove ecclesiastical authorship. Based on narrative style, Iestyn Daniel⁸⁰ proposed that all of the tales of The Mabinogion except *Culhwch ac Olwen* were composed by a single 13th century author (probably Llywelyn Offeiriad, possibly nick-named Cnepyn Gwerthrynion).⁸¹

Sioned Davies, in her earlier work *the Four Branches of the Mabinogi*,⁸² attributed the Four Branches to the professional story teller, the *cyfarwydd*, as a definite product of story-telling and the oral tradition. Glenys Goetinck⁸³ suggests that the author was a “mynach o dde-dwyrain Cymru, Llancarfan efallai”⁸⁴ and that he possessed a wide knowledge of history, tradition, literature of Wales and Ireland, the English language, the Bible, the Welsh laws, and the contemporary political situation. Brynley Roberts⁸⁵ argues that a Gwynedd author was responsible for the *Four Branches*; his argument is based on the use of geography in the texts and the assurance with which the author uses the geographical references in Gwynedd.

⁷⁹ J. K. Bollard, “A literary assessment of the Four Branches of the Mabinogi”, unpublished MA thesis, Aberystwyth, 1970, 19.

⁸⁰ Iestyn Daniel, ‘The Date, Origin and Authorship of “The Mabinogion” in the Light of *Ymborth yr Enaid*’, *The Journal of Celtic Studies*, 4 (2004), 117-52.

⁸¹ For an evaluation of the argument, see Simon Rodway, ‘The Where, Who, When and Why of Medieval Welsh Prose Texts: Some Methodological Considerations’, *Studia Celtica*, 41 (2007), 47-89

⁸² Sioned Davies, *The Four Branches of the Mabinogi: Pedair Keinc y Mabinogi*, Llandysul, 1993.

⁸³ Glenys Goetinck. “Pedair Cainc y Mabinogi: yr awdur a’i bwrpas”, *Llên Cymru* (1988), 249-69.

⁸⁴ Glenys Goetinck. “Yr awdur a’i bwrpas”, 268.

... “monk from South-East Wales, perhaps Llancarfan”. (Translation mine.)

⁸⁵ Brynley Roberts, “Where were the Four Branches of the Mabinogi written?” J. F. Nagy (ed.), *The Individual in Celtic Literatures*, CSANA Yearbook 1 (Dublin, 2000), 61-73.

Sioned Davies⁸⁶ and Ian Hughes⁸⁷ have advanced arguments for multiple authorship. Their arguments are based on the textual evidence, contents, atmosphere and textual characteristics (Hughes), and on narrative techniques and the differences between individual branches (Davies). Hughes does not exclude the possibility of a single final redactor and speculates that this redactor lived perhaps around the beginning of the 11th century and worked with saga materials before he compiled the texts of the *Four Branches*.⁸⁸ Ned Sturzer⁸⁹ argues that in the light of textual inconsistencies between the tales, the *Four Branches* are not likely the work of a single author.

Andrew Breeze, based on a somewhat less than satisfactory analysis (described above), ascribed the authorship of the Four Branches to Princess Gwenllïan. Simon Rodway⁹⁰ offers a comprehensive bibliography regarding the problems of dating and authorship of all the texts of *The Mabinogion*.

The debate on authorship, along with the question of dating, remains open. The two problems are connected with one another, and while identifying the author, or authors, would certainly limit the temporal brackets of the date of composition, we seem to lack adequate textual proof that would enable us to pin down the elusive author. What is more, it seems that the possibility of multiple authorship is a serious consideration that

⁸⁶ Sioned Davies: "Pedair Keinc y Mabinogi: a case for multiple authorship?" Proceedings of the First North American Congress of Celtic Studies held at Ottawa from 26th 30th March 1986, Ottawa, 1988, 443-459.

⁸⁷ Ian Hughes, "Die Drei Zweige des Mabinogi", *Akten des ersten Symposiums deutschsprachiger Keltologen*, (ed.) M Rockel and S. Zimmer (Tübingen, 1993), 121-131.

⁸⁸ See Ian Hughes, "Drei Zweige", 130-31.

⁸⁹ Ned Sturzer, 'Inconsistencies and Infelicities in the Welsh Tales', *Studia Celtica*, 37, (2003) 127-42

⁹⁰ Simon Rodway, 'The Where, Who, When and Why of Medieval Welsh Prose Texts: Some Methodological Considerations', *Studia Celtica*, 41 (2007), 47-89

is supported by the present-day research, such as the unpublished M.Phil thesis by Marieke Meelen⁹¹ that concentrates on the linguistics of the *Four Branches*, as well as by the findings of the present research.

F. Scholars who have studied onomastic lore

T. Gerald Hunter⁹² has investigated onomastic lore in medieval Welsh tales and examined its role and place in the narrative. Christel Frankel⁹³ examines the names of the characters in the Four Branches, their significance and the implications a name has for the character of the person bearing it.

G. Scholars who have looked at the material from the point of view of gender studies, generally in connection with characterization

Kirstie Chandler discusses the masculinity and idealization of men in medieval Welsh literature (*The Gododdin*, *Llywarch Hen* stanzas, *Culhwch ac Olwen*, the *Four Branches*, the *Three Romances*). Her thesis suggests that there are different concepts of masculinity presented in the texts, and that there is evidence of either reinforcing the male ideology (that was dominant at the time), or adapting models of masculinity, or even challenging the assumptions of patriarchy. Chandler claims that the Four Branches

⁹¹ Marieke Meelen, "Linguistic variety in the Four Branches: origin and development of the Welsh *sef*-construction", unpublished M.Phil thesis, Leiden, 2010. I am much obliged to Dr. Ian Hughes for allowing me to read his copy of this thesis.

⁹² T. Gerald Hunter, 'Onomastic lore in the native middle Welsh prose tales', unpublished MPhil thesis, Aberystwyth, 1988.

⁹³ Christel Frankel, 'What's in a name? Names, their meaning and function in the Four Branches of the *Mabinogion*' [sic], MA thesis, 2006.

have more of a sense of morality than earlier texts and a “less conspicuously male-oriented setting.”⁹⁴ She notices several oppositions in the texts such as those of virtue and vice, friendship and feuding, women against men, old values against new values. Chandler also draws attention to the lack of authorial judgements in all four texts of the *Mabinogi*. She observes that both men and women in the Four Branches are defined by their roles and draws attention to the complexity of characters and the ambiguous morality that is present in *Math*. She concludes that the roles of men and ideals of masculinity are varied in medieval Welsh literature, and the discussion could only be about different types of masculinity.

Sioned Davies⁹⁵ notices the ubiquitous victory of good over evil in every tale. Roberta Valente disagrees regarding the ending of *Math*, which she perceives as negative due to the actions of the male characters.⁹⁶ She also perceives the remnants of a matriarchal order in *Rhiannon* in terms of morality and ethics. The main power of women in the *Four Branches* lies in their words, not in their actions.⁹⁷

Danw November⁹⁸ shares the negative point of view and only sees something positive in Aranrhod’s refusal to let herself be moulded into the patriarchal system. The women in the *Four Branches* do not receive the same justice they should in a harmonious

⁹⁴ Kirstie S. Chandler, “Masculinity and Medieval Welsh Literature”, unpublished PhD thesis, Aberystwyth, 2004, 66.

⁹⁵ Sioned Davies, *Pedair keinc y Mabinogi*, 13.

⁹⁶ Roberta L. Valente, *Merched y Mabinogi*, 284.

⁹⁷ Roberta L. Valente, *Merched y Mabinogi*, 67.

⁹⁸ Danw November, ‘Y fenyw a’r Mabinogi’, *Y Traethodydd* CLI (1996), 233-250.

world. November does not look at the way the texts would have been read in the Middle Ages, however, but seems to take the position of a contemporary reader.

Juliette Wood contributes to the gender-based debate with her reading of the *Four Branches* that centres on the Calumniated Wife motif. She perceives the mistrust for Rhiannon and Branwen as a consequence of their foreignness in their husbands' countries.

The women in the Four Branches, compared to the female characters in medieval literature in general, seem to have more freedom, more independence, and more personality. Some of them possess the power of words and thought (Rhiannon), the power of communicating with animals (Branwen), and the power to impose curses upon others (Aranrhod). The degree of marginalization of women seems smaller. Fiona Winward,⁹⁹ however, perceives the women's independence to be progressively degenerating through different stages of the women's lives.

Catherine Byfield¹⁰⁰ notes the difference between the rash actions of the man and the rational thinking of the woman in *Pwyll* and contrasts that with Manawydan's habit of thinking, rationalizing and qualifying all his actions. Pwyll is perceived as naïve, impetuous, racing into doing things without thinking. This has been opposed by James Fife as described in the section discussing the scholarship on the legal issues in the texts.

⁹⁹ Fiona Winward, "Some Aspects of the Women of *The Four Branches*", *CMCS* 34 (Winter 1997), 77-106

¹⁰⁰ Catherine Byfield, "Character and conflict in the Four Branches of the Mabinogi", *Bulletin of the Board of Celtic Studies* XL, (1993), 51-72.

Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan¹⁰¹ discusses the issues of gender and violence in the *Four Branches*, and the resemblance of the tales to the society for which they were told, performed, or written. Andrew Breeze has contributed to the gender oriented debate with the above-mentioned argument for female authorship of the *Four Branches*.

Branwen Jarvis¹⁰² discusses the character of Efnysien as that who causes disagreement, brings about trouble.

Catherine McKenna¹⁰³ discusses characters in terms of sovereignty and lordship. Pwyll is concerned with Arawn's social status when they meet, while Arawn on the other hand is dissatisfied with Pwyll's manners (or lack thereof) rather than with his inferior social standing. Pwyll, according to McKenna, is at the end of first branch what a Welsh prince of 11th/12th century should be.¹⁰⁴ She perceives Manawydan's faults as a character in the fact that he avoids his duty as a man, for which he is punished by the two disappearances (of land and of the two people nearest and dearest to him).¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan, "Gender and violence in the Four Branches of the Mabinogi", *150 Jahre Mabinogion – deutsch-walisische Kulturbeziehungen*, (eds.) Bernhard Maier, Stefan Zimmer, Christiane Batke, Tübingen, 2001, 67-78.

¹⁰² Branwen Jarvis, "Yr Awdur a'i Gymeriadau: Y Portread o Efnysien yn Ail Gainc y Mabinogi", in Jason Walford Davies (ed.), *Gweledigaethau: Cyfrol Deyrnged yr Athro Gwyn Thomas*, Llandybie, 2007, 61-78.

¹⁰³ Catherine McKenna, "The theme of sovereignty in *Pwyll*", *BBCS XXIX* (1980-82), 35-52; "Learning Lordship: the education of *Manawydan*", Carey, Koch and Lambert (eds.), *Ildánach, Ildírech: a Festschrift for Proinsias Mac Cana*, Aberystwyth, 1999, 101-120.

¹⁰⁴ McKenna, "The theme of sovereignty", 52.

¹⁰⁵ McKenna, "Learning lordship", 119.

Morgan Kay¹⁰⁶ proposes that Wales after the invasion of the Normans should be viewed as a postcolonial culture and that postcolonial perspective on the women and their roles shows that the presence of loss and sadness in the female characters is a direct consequence of the invasion and subsequent life under the Normans. She looks at the female characters as oppressed and examines their ways of dealing with events such as taking the blame, mourning, and enduring the consequences of certain rash actions on the part of the male characters. Kay uses the postcolonial perspective to attempt to explain why the female characters are portrayed with such a great deal of sympathy.

Among the latest generation of scholars, K. R. L. Kapphahn¹⁰⁷ discusses characterization with regard to the construction of gender and the evolution of gender roles in early Wales, while Lowri Morgans¹⁰⁸ deals with body language.

H. Scholars who have dealt with narratology and structure

Several scholars have discussed the structure, narrative and narrative techniques of the *Four Branches*. Sioned Davies has published several works on the topic, most notably her seminal work of 1995, *Crefft y Cyfarwydd*. *Crefft y Cyfarwydd* discusses the medieval story-tellers' art and the techniques they may have used, such as the formulae,

¹⁰⁶ Morgan Kay, "Gendered postcolonial discourse in the Mabinogi", *Proceedings of the Harvard Colloquium*, 24/25 (2004/2005), 216-228.

¹⁰⁷ K.R.L. Kapphahn, "Constructions of gender in Medieval Welsh Literature", unpublished MA thesis, Aberystwyth, 2009.

¹⁰⁸ Lowri H. Morgans, "Iaith y corff yn y chwedlau canoloesol Cymraeg", unpublished MPhil thesis, Aberystwyth, 2011.

their variation and uses, the dialogue and the structure of the eleven tales of *The Mabinogion*. This work is an extended and elaborated version of her 1989 study of *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi*, which discusses the background, the structure and the narrative techniques of the *Four Branches* only. Certain aspects of the older work are revised and altered in *Crefft y Cyfarwydd*.

Ian Hughes¹⁰⁹ deals with the tripartite structure of *Manawydan* and with the patterns of repetition such as the three losses of Manawydan, the three restorations, the three fields, and the three church officials who attempt to rescue the captive mouse. Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan¹¹⁰ also writes about incremental repetition and the importance of the triadic structures in the *Four Branches*. Lloyd-Morgan also discusses the grouping of characters and events into groups of three. Ned Sturzer¹¹¹ and Elizabeth Hanson-Smith¹¹² have both contributed to the debate on the structure and episodic division of individual branches, as has Jeffrey Gantz.¹¹³ Hanson-Smith concentrates on the structure of *Pwyll*, divides it into episodes and discusses the wasteland myth that she sees in the underlying pattern.

¹⁰⁹ Ian Hughes, "Tripartite structure in Manawydan Uab Llyr", Mícheál Ó Flaithearta (ed.), *Proceedings of the Seventh Symposium of Societas Celtologica Nordica*, Uppsala, 2007, 99-110.

¹¹⁰ Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan, "Triadic structure in the Four Branches of the Mabinogi", *Shadow* 5, 1988, 3-11.

¹¹¹ Ned Sturzer, "Inconsistencies", *SC XXXVII* (2003), 127-42.

¹¹² Elizabeth Hanson-Smith, 'Pwyll Prince of Dyfed: the narrative structure', *Studia Celtica* XVI/XVII (1981/1982), 126-35.

¹¹³ Jeffrey Gantz, "Thematic Structure of the Four Branches of the Mabinogi", *Medium Aevum*, 47 (1978), 247-54.

Satoko Ito-Morino¹¹⁴ discusses the narrative structure of the *Four Branches* and the *Three Romances* in her PhD thesis, and the perception of the story and its structure by medieval audiences in the article “The sense of ending in the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*”. J. K. Bollard¹¹⁵ examines the Four Branches and the structural pattern of the tales, finding it very intricate and revealing the coherence, unity and deep understanding of the material that he attributed to the great skill of a single author. He discusses the interlace technique and the themes of friendships, marriages and feuds in the *Four Branches*.

The structure of the *Four Branches* is indeed a very intricately woven pattern, as Bollard observes. The patterns of triadic repetition at the level of the narrative and at the level of structure reveal a knowledge and understanding of literary theory that was probably accessible to the men of learning at the time, as well as an awareness of the power of the structure of a literary work, of the perils of faulty structure, and the desire to produce more than just individual works of prose but to create a literary cycle. The narratives show that there was an early awareness of the audience and keeping the audience interested was considered of great importance. The four narratives express a great deal of coherence and unity, however there are certain elements which single out one of the tales to the point where it seems unlikely that the same person produced all four of them.¹¹⁶ While the original author may have been himself keenly aware of the

¹¹⁴ Satoko Ito, “The Three Romances and the Four Branches : their narrative structure and relationship with native Welsh lore”, unpublished PhD thesis, Aberystwyth, 1989. Satoko Ito-Morino, “The sense of ending in the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*”, *ZCP* 49-50, Issue 1, 341–348.

¹¹⁵ J. K. Bollard, *A Literary Assessment of the Four Branches of the Mabinogi*, unpublished MA thesis, Aberystwyth, 1970.

¹¹⁶ I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Dr. Ian Hughes here, who shared his own views on the matter here, as well as his research findings relevant to the matter, with me.

importance of unity and coherence, certain elements suggest that at some point during the copying process, before the existence of the Red and White Books, the texts that existed must have undergone a significant amount of editing to be preserved in the form in which they have been preserved until the present day. It also seems possible that the final redactor who was responsible for giving the tales their final structure, which was then copied an unknown number of times and preserved in both the Red and the White Books, only had three original texts to work with instead of four, and that he produced an extra tale in order to enlarge and enhance the cycle. The tale that he seems to have manufactured is the Third Branch, known as *Manawydan*. *Manawydan* stands apart from the other three tales in many respects: the character of Manawydan is more enlightened and more concerned with humanism and mortals than any other character in the cycle. The presence of Christianity, its institutional values and moral ideals is expressed for the first time through Manawydan's actions and through the physical presence of the church officials, namely the cleric, the priest and the bishop. Often, the use of certain words is almost unique to *Manawydan* (see Marieke Meelen's MPhil thesis mentioned earlier). The fact that one tale is so different, yet in such unity and coherence with the other three, suggests two things: firstly, that the final form was given to all four narratives by a single person who adjusted the original material until it displayed a significant amount of internal coherence and unity that allowed him to view and treat all of them as a literary cycle. Secondly, this signifies that the final redactor's primary interest lay not in each individual narrative as an independent and entirely unique entity, but more in the production of a larger literary cycle which would unite several texts on the level of internal structure as well as on the level of the story through shared characters.

II. 3 The eight selected Irish texts: *Compert Con Culainn*, *Aided Óenfir Aife*, *Tochmarc Emire*, *Mesca Ulad*, *Táin Bó Fraích*, *Echtra Nerai*, *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*, *Longes Mac n-Uislenn*

II.3.1 Medieval Irish literature and the division into cycles

Traditionally, the prose tales of early Ireland were divided into groups according to the type, or genre, of tale. The two tale lists edited by Proinsias Mac Cana¹¹⁷ list the following twelve categories of *prímscéla*: *togla* ('destructions'), *tána* ('cattle raids'), *tochmarca* ('wooings'), *catha* ('battles'), *uatha* ('terrors'), *imrama* ('voyages'), *oitte* ('violent deaths'), *fessa* ('feasts'), *forbassa* ('sieges'), *echtrada* ('adventures'), *aithid* ('elopements'), and *airggne* ('plunderings'). Apart from these categories, Mac Cana also lists five other categories of tale that are reckoned as major tales: *tomadma* ('eruptions [of lakes]'), *físi* ('visions'), *serca* ('love stories'), *sluagid* ('hostings'), and *toch[om]lada* ('migrations').

Myles Dillon and Proinsias Mac Cana, discussing the *Allegory of Urard Mac Coise*, mention a slightly different classification that is mentioned in the story:¹¹⁸ when poet Urard Mac Coise is asked for a story, he gives the king a choice of chief stories of Ireland: *gnáthscéla* ('a group of common stories'), *tána* ('cattle-raids'), *echtra* ('adventures'), *coimperta* ('birth-tales'), *catha* ('battles'), *togla* ('plunderings'), *fesa* ('feasts'), *buili* ('frenzies'), *tochmarca* ('wooings'), *aithid* ('elopements'), a second group

¹¹⁷ Proinsias Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, 41-47. The early Irish tale lists are discussed in more detail in the Introduction.

¹¹⁸ Myles Dillon, *The Cycles of the Kings*, Oxford, 1946, 115; Proinsias Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, 25 ff.

of *togla*), *tomadmann* ('floods'), *físi* ('visions'), *serca* ('love-tales'), *slúagid* ('hostings'), *tochomlada* ('invasions'), *orcni* ('destructions').

The categories are essentially similar, if not the same, as the ones mentioned by Mac Cana, with a few variations. However, this division, while extremely useful for the *filid*, was abandoned by the scholars of the 20th century in favour of classification into cycles, which was introduced by Myles Dillon.¹¹⁹ The classification into cycles disregards the type of tale and is based on the material dealt with by different tales.

Dillon distinguished between the following four cycles:

- The Mythological Cycle,
- The Ulster Cycle,
- The Fenian Cycle,
- The Historical Cycle.

It has to be noted that the above division into cycles is a product of the academic mind, and as such did not apply in the Middle Ages.

The material of the Mythological Cycle are the tales that account the doings of the Túatha Dé Dannan, the peoples of the goddess Danu, or Anu, who have certain supernatural characteristics which set them aside from ordinary human beings. They live in fairy-mounds (*síde*) and are learned in arts and magic.

The Ulster Cycle is one of the two heroic cycles and comprises legends and sagas centred largely around Cú Chulainn, the nephew of Conchobor Mac Nessa king of Emain

¹¹⁹ Myles Dillon, *Early Irish Literature*, Chicago, 1948.

Macha (today Navan Fort) in the province of Ulster, after which the cycle is named. Some of the other important characters from this cycle are Fergus mac Róich (an exiled king of the Ulstermen), Medb Queen of Connacht, and her husband, Ailill, the three sons of Uisnech (Ainnle, Noísiu, Ardann), Conall Cernach, druid Cathbad, Fróech, Findabair, Connla, Cú Roí, Nera, Derdriu, and Bricriu. Many tales concentrate on the antagonism between the protagonists – the Ulaid and the Connachta. The central tale, *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, which is the longest and most important of the tales, for example, deals with the stealing of the Ulaid's prize bull by queen Medb of Connacht. The tales of the Ulster Cycle are associated with the territory of the Ulaid, that is, *Crích Ulad*, to the east of Lough Neagh and river Bann.

The stories are set in pagan times, supposedly around the time of Christ's birth and death.¹²⁰ The language of some of the stories is possibly dateable to the 8th century (although preserved in manuscripts of much later date). It is unclear whether the characters and stories were essentially mythical or historical, and different schools of thought have argued for both sides; T. F. O'Rahilly¹²¹ is, for example, one of the best known scholars that belonged to the former school of thought, while Meyer and O'Curry represent the latter. Hull¹²² states it is difficult to prove how much of the foundation of the tales lies in historical facts, and argues that a large part is mythical. Several of the tales have undergone changes and been modernised throughout the centuries, and this

¹²⁰ See Kenneth Jackson, *The Oldest Tradition: a Window on the Iron Age*, Cambridge, 1964. Jackson regarded the stories as highly important in terms of their offering a glimpse of the Irish pagan civilization. This notion was criticized by J. P. Mallory in *Aspects of the Táin* ("The World of Cú Chulainn: The Archaeology of the *Táin Bó Cúailnge* – History of Research"), 108.

¹²¹ T. F. O'Rahilly, *Early Irish History and Mythology*, Dublin, 1946.

¹²² Eleanor Hull, *A Textbook of Irish Literature, Part I*, Dublin, 1906, 24-34.

tradition continued in the 19th and 20th century, with the best-known adaptations being those by W. B. Yeats and J. M. Synge.

The second heroic cycle, sometimes referred to as the Finn Cycle or *fianaigheacht*, are the stories that revolve around Find Mac Cumail and his warband, the *fian*. The Finn Cycle is further subdivided into the traditions of Leinster, Connacht, and Munster, the first one being the most popular.

Also known today as *The Cycles of Kings*¹²³ (since there are a number of separate cycles), the Historical Cycle is possibly still the least studied of the four cycles, but no less important for the Irish literature. There are some seventy stories dealing with kings (both high and provincial), dynasties, and succession, and can be classified according to the kings who appear in them.

¹²³ See Dillon, *The Cycles of Kings*, v ff., 2 ff.

II.3.2 Manuscript sources of the Irish tales relevant to the present research¹²⁴

II.3.2.1 *Compert Con Culainn*

Version I is preserved in the following manuscripts:

- Lebor na hUidre¹²⁵ (RIA 23 E25), pp. 128ab (1106). A passage at the end of the tale was “erased by the Interpolator and replaced by the sequel of Version II”.¹²⁶
- TCD MS 1363 (H 4.22), pp. 46-7 (15th century).
- RIA 23 N 10, pp. 62-3 (16th century).
- BM Eg. 88, f 12b 2-13a 1 (16th century).
- BM Eg. 1782.
- RIA D 4.2 (Stowe 922), pp. 46r b-47 v b (1300).
- TCD MS 1287 (H 1.13), p. 342. (1743-46).
- Dublin, National Library of Ireland, (Phillips) G 7, col. 7-9.

Version II is preserved in:

- BM Eg. 1782, f. 78-9 (1517). (Also known as *Feis Tige Becfoltaig*, is an extended variant of Version I and is later, possibly by fifty or a hundred years.¹²⁷)

Van Hamel’s edition is based on the Lebor na hUidre text, with conclusion from TCD H 4.22, RIA 23 N. 10 and BM Eg. 88.

¹²⁴ See also, Johan Corthals, MS OMIT, available online: <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/MsOmit2010/index.htm>. Accessed 4 May 2011.

¹²⁵ Henceforth LU.

¹²⁶ A. G. Van Hamel, *Compert*, 1.

¹²⁷ A. G. Van Hamel, *Compert*, 1.

II.3.2.2 *Aided Óenfir Aífe*

Version I

- YBL (214a-215a) TCD Ms 1318 (h 2.16)], cols. 955-7¹²⁸ (14th century).

Version II

- TCD — H.3.17, p. 842

Van Hamel's edition is based on Version I.

II.3.2.3 *Tochmarc Emire*

- RIA 23 N 10, pp. 21-24, 113-124, 11-12, 25-26, 125-128.
- RIA D IV 2: f 74r a-78v b.
- Eg. 92 (Fermoy): f 24r a-25v b. Fragment.
- Fermoy II, pp. 207a-212b. Fragment.
- HA. 5280, f.27r-35r b.

Version I:

- LU, p. 121a-127b. Missing part II.

Version II:

- Rawl. B512:1, f. 117r a-118 r b. Missing part I.

¹²⁸ Van Hamel cites YBL (214a-215a).

Van Hamel's edition gives Version III, which is a combination of two fragments, Version I and Version II.

II.3.2.4 *Mesca Ulad*

- Ed. XL:IV, f. 25r a-118r b. (Texts of LU and LL.)
- G 4 (Yellow Book of Lecan), col. 959-972, (Texts of Lu and LL.)
- *Lebor Laingen* (the Book of Leinster¹²⁹), pp. 261b-268b. (Missing part II. This version is known as MU2.¹³⁰)
- LU, pp. 19a-20b. (Missing part I. This version is known as MU1.)

J. Carmichael Watson's edition is a combination of MU2 and MU1.

II.3.2.5 *Echtra Nerai*

- Eg. 1782, f. 71v-73v.
- YBL: III, col. 658-662 (pp. 60a-62a).

Kuno Meyer's edition is based on Eg. 1782.

¹²⁹ Henceforth LL.

¹³⁰ J. Carmichael Watson, *Mesca Ulad*, vii-ix.

II.3.2.6 *Táin Bó Fraích*

- LL (TCD H 2.18), p. 183v-185v (second half of 12th century).
- YBL (TCD H 2. 16), col. 649, 47-685 (end of 13th century).
- Eg. 1782, f 82V-87V (1517).
- H 3.18: XIX, p. 604 (ca. 1700).
- LL, p 248a-252b.

Wolfgang Meid's edition is based on the Book of Leinster.

II.3.2.7 *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*

- Ed. XXXVI, f. 86r-91v.
- H 3.18: XXII, p. 743-748.
- H 6.8, p. 37-50.
- Ha. 5280, f. 50r-53r.
- LL, p. 111b-114a.
- Rawl. B 512: I, f. 105v b-108r b.

Rudolf Thurneysen's edition is based on TCD H. 3. 18.

II.3.2.8 *Longes Mac n-Uislenn*

- Eg. 1782: f 67r-69v (1517).
- The Book of Leinster (TCD H 2.18), p. 259b-261b (second half of 12th century).
- YBL (TCD H 2.16): III, col. 749-753 (facs., p. 109b-111b) (end of 14th century).

Vernam Hull's edition is based on The Book of Leinster.

II.4 A brief survey of the scholarship regarding the eight selected Irish tales

The vast majority of the studies on the Irish literature of the Ulster Cycle concentrate on *Táin Bó Cuailnge* as the largest and most complex part of the cycle. The situation regarding the division of scholarship into various schools of thought is somewhat similar to that regarding the scholarship on the *Four Branches*. Since *Táin Bó Cuailnge* is not relevant to the present research, the following is only a brief list of some schools of thought with references.

A. Scholars who have researched the sources of the material

Eugene O'Curry argued that the texts were historical and gave an accurate image of the early history;¹³¹ Kenneth Jackson believed they were the result of some distant memories of the past of the Continental Celts, and drew a parallel with the Gauls,

¹³¹ Eugene O'Curry, *Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History*, Dublin, 1861, 239.

suggesting that the tales were the result of the survival of ancient Celtic institutions that also existed in Gaul.¹³² The suggestion was that the Irish may have read Posidonius and applied that knowledge. John Koch rejected this idea on grounds of the evidence that the Irish did not have any knowledge of Posidonius, so they could not have based the descriptions of their ancestors on literary descriptions of the ancient Celts and their culture.¹³³ This, however, does not prove that there was no connection or parallel between the Celts and Gaul.

Gregory Toner¹³⁴ revisited the issue and proposed that historical reading can have many benefits for the understanding of a literary interpretation of tales. Paolo Taviani examined the mythical function of the tales in comparison with the classical myths.¹³⁵

B. Scholars who have investigated the narrative devices that commonly occur in the Irish prose tales

Patrick Sims-Williams¹³⁶ has offered an examination of the watchman device and compared its use to that in *Branwen*; Dorothy Dilts Swartz¹³⁷ and John Carey¹³⁸

¹³² Kenneth Jackson, *The Oldest Irish Tradition*.

¹³³ John T. Koch, 'Windows on the iron age: 1964-1994', J. P. Mallory and G. Stockman (eds.), *Ulidia*, Belfast, 1994, 229-38; *Celtic Culture: a Historical Encyclopedia*, Santa Barbara, 2005.

¹³⁴ Gregory Toner, "The Ulster Cycle: historiography or fiction?", CMCS, 40 (Winter 2000), 1-20.

¹³⁵ Paolo Taviani, "The mythical function of Irish *scéla*: reality upturned in the Ulster Cycle". Ugo Bianchi (ed.), *The Notion of Religion in Comparative Research*, Roma, 1994, 395-402.

¹³⁶ Patrick Sims-Williams, "Riddling Treatment"; revised version in *Irish Influence on Medieval Welsh Literature*, Oxford, 2011.

¹³⁷ Dorothy Dilts Swartz, "The problem of classical influence in the Book of Leinster *Táin Bó Cúailnge*: significant parallels with twelfth century Neo-Classical rhetoric", *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, Vol. 7, (1987), 69-103; "Balance in the Book of Leinster *Táin Bó Cúailnge* and in Classical Rhetoric", *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, Vol. 6 (1986), 29-46; "Repetition in the Book of Leinster *Táin Bó Cúailnge* and in Neo-Classical rhetoric". *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, Vol. 4 (1984), 45-81.

concentrate on *retoiric*; William F. Glennon¹³⁹ discusses the use of similes; Proinsias Mac Cana,¹⁴⁰ Liam Breatnach,¹⁴¹ Karin Olsen,¹⁴² and Johan Corthals¹⁴³ investigated *roscada* in prose; Cecile O’Rahilly¹⁴⁴ examined repetition as a narrative device.

C. Legal aspects have been examined by several scholars, including Thomas Owen Clancy¹⁴⁵ and Tomás Ó Cathasaigh.¹⁴⁶

D. Scholars who have dealt with characterization include John Carey,¹⁴⁷ Kathryn Stelmach,¹⁴⁸ Josef Baudiš,¹⁴⁹ and Barbara Hillers.¹⁵⁰

E. The gender aspect has been examined, among others, by Joanne Findon,¹⁵¹ Dorothy Dilts Swartz,¹⁵² Philip O’Leary and Ann Dooley.¹⁵³

¹³⁸ John Carey, The rhetoric of *Echtrae Chonlaí*, *CMCS* 30 (Winter 1995), 41-65.

¹³⁹ William F. Glennon, “The similes in the Book of Leinster *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, Vol. 17 (1997), 206-222.

¹⁴⁰ Proinsias Mac Cana, “Notes on the combination of prose and verse in early Irish narrative”, Stephen V. Tranter/Hildegard L. C. Tristram (eds.), *Early Irish Literature – Media and Communication/Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit in der frühen irischen Literatur*, Tübingen, 1989. 125-48.

¹⁴¹ Liam Breatnach, “Zur Frage der Roscada im Irischen”, Hildegard L. C. Tristram (ed.), *Metrik und Medienwechsel/Metrics and Media*, Tübingen, 1991. 197-205.

¹⁴² Karin Olsen, “The cuckold’s revenge: reconstructing six Irish roscada in *Táin Bó Cúailnge*”, *CMCS* 28 (Winter 1994), 51-69.

¹⁴³ Johan Corthals, “Zur Frage des mündlichen oder schriftlichen Ursprungs der *Sagenroscada*”, Stephen V. Tranter/Hildegard L. C. Tristram (eds.), *Early Irish Literature*, 201-20; “Early Irish *retoirics* and their late antique background”, *CMCS*, 31 (Summer 1996), 17-36.

¹⁴⁴ Cecile O’Rahilly, “Repetition: a narrative device in TBC”. *Ériu* 30, 67-74.

¹⁴⁵ Thomas Owen Clancy, “Court, king and justice in the Ulster Cycle”, Helen Fulton (ed.), *Medieval Celtic Literature and Society*, Dublin, 2005, 163-182.

¹⁴⁶ Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, *Táin Bó Cúailnge and Early Irish Law*, Dublin, 2005.

¹⁴⁷ John Carey, “Cú Chulainn as ailing hero”, Ronald Black, William Gillies, Roibeard O’Maolalaigh (eds.), *Celtic Connections: Proceedings of the Tenth International Congress of Celtic Studies. Volume One: Language, Literature, History, Culture*, Egstlington, 1999. 190-198.

¹⁴⁸ Kathryn Stelmach, “Dead Deirdre? Myth and mortality in the Irish literary revival”, Joseph Falaky Nagy (ed.), *Myth in Celtic Literature*, CSANA Yearbook 6, Dublin 2007, 141-160.

¹⁴⁹ J. Baudiš, “Cú Roí and Cú Chulinn”, *Ériu* 7 (1913-1914), 200-210.

¹⁵⁰ Barbara Hillers, “The Heroes of the Ulster Cycle”, J. Mallory and G. Stockman (eds.), *Ulidia*, Belfast, 1994, 99- 106.

II.4.1 *Compert Con Culainn*

Rudolf Thurneysen¹⁵⁴ presented the different versions of *Compert Con Culainn* as preserved in different sources. Tomás Ó Concheanainn¹⁵⁵ examined the two versions of the tale that are preserved in different manuscripts. John Carey¹⁵⁶ considered the possibility of the affiliation of several texts (including *Compert Con Culainn*) that were apparently part of the lost manuscript *Cín Dromma Snechtai*.

Kaarina Hollo¹⁵⁷ discusses Cú Chulainn's connection with supernatural places such as Sid Truim as his place of birth and death. Tomás Ó Cathasaigh¹⁵⁸ examines Cú Chulainn's birth from the point of view of the wasteland motif, and its connection with the Otherworld. Marion Deane¹⁵⁹ discusses the connection between birth tales and incest in view of premature childhood death, interrupted pregnancy and pregnancy brought to full-term. Peter Parkes¹⁶⁰ evaluates the paternity and multiple fosterage of Cú Chulainn in terms of connections that result from it.

¹⁵¹ Joanne Findon, *A Woman's Words: Emer and Female Speech in the Ulster Cycle*, Toronto, Buffalo, London, 1997. Also, "A Woman's Words: Emer versus Cu Chulainn in Aided Oenfir Aife," *Ulidia*, 139-48.

¹⁵² Dorothy Dilts Swartz, "The beautiful women and the warriors in the *LL TBC* and in twelfth-century Neo-Classical rhetoric", *Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, Vol. 5 (1985), 128-46.

¹⁵³ Ann Dooley, "The invention of women in the *Táin*", J. Mallory and G. Stockman (eds.), *Ulidia*, Belfast, 1994, 123-133; *Playing the Hero: Reading of the Irish Saga Táin Bó Cúailnge*, Toronto, 2006.

¹⁵⁴ Rudolf Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 268-73.

¹⁵⁵ Tomás Ó Concheanainn, "The textual tradition of *Compert Con Culainn*", *Celtica* 21, (1990), 441-455.

¹⁵⁶ James Carey, "On the interrelationships of some *Cín Dromma Snechtai* texts", *Ériu* 46 (1995), 71-92.

¹⁵⁷ Kaarina Hollo, "Cú Chulainn and Sid Truim", *Ériu* 49 (1998), 13-22.

¹⁵⁸ Tomás Ó Cathasaigh, "Between god and man: the hero of Irish tradition", *The Crane bag*, Vol. 2, ½ (1978), 72-79.

¹⁵⁹ Marion Deane, "Dangerous liaisons", *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 23 (2003), 52-79.

¹⁶⁰ Peter Parkes, "Fosterage, kinship and legend: when milk was thicker than blood?", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 46, no. 3 (2004), 587-615.

II.4.2 *Aided Óenfir Aife*

Anna Ranero¹⁶¹ explores the motif of the mortal combat between father and son and compares and contrasts *Aided Óenfir Aife* with the Indian epic *Mahabharata* in terms of the structure of the motif in each tale, and the underlying myth. Michael Chesnutt¹⁶² examines the same motif pattern and compares it with *Shahnama* and *Hildebrandslied*. Philip O’Leary¹⁶³ examines Emer’s questioning of Cú Chulainn’s obedience to the accepted code of conduct when she warns him that he will slay his own flesh and blood if he fights the unidentified boy. Joanne Findon¹⁶⁴ discusses the role of Emer in *Aided Óenfir Aife* as that of a woman who challenges the accepted code of conduct and opposes her husband’s decision.

II.4.3 *Tochmarc Emire*

Tochmarc Emire has been compared with several other tales. John Carey¹⁶⁵ draws a parallel between *Tochmarc Emire* and late medieval romance and oral tales on account of the similarities between Cú Chulainn’s exploits and the exploits of the protagonists of romances. Doris Edel¹⁶⁶ makes a comparison with *Kulhwch ac Olwen*. A.T. Hatto’s

¹⁶¹ Anna M. Ranero, “That is what Scáthach did not teach me: *Aided Óenfir Aife* and an episode from the *Mahabharata*”, *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 16/17 (1996/97), 244-55.

¹⁶² Michael Chesnutt, “The fatherless hero in the playground. Irish perspectives on the Norse Legend of Sigurd”, *Béaloides*, 68 (2000), 33-65.

¹⁶³ Philip O’Leary, “The honour of women in early Irish literature”, *Ériu*, 38 (1987), 27-44.

¹⁶⁴ Joanne Findon, *A Woman’s Words: Emer and Female Speech in the Ulster Cycle*, Toronto, Buffalo, London, 1997.

¹⁶⁵ John Carey, “Otherworlds and verbal worlds in Middle Irish narrative”, *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 9 (1989), 31-42.

¹⁶⁶ Doris Edel, *Helden auf Freiersfüssen*, Amsterdam, Oxford, New York, 1980.

article¹⁶⁷ compares the theme of a father killing his own son in *Tochmarc Emire* and *Aided Óenfir Aífe* with several epic narratives. Raymond Cormier¹⁶⁸ also compares Cú Chulainn to the romance heroes of Chrétien de Troyes and examines the heroic component. William Sayers¹⁶⁹ offers an examination of the martial feats that Cú Chulainn and other protagonists of the Ulster Cycle perform.

Gregory Toner¹⁷⁰ describes the relationships between several manuscripts in which the narrative survives; he examines the aspect of intertextuality and concludes that the narrative of *Tochmarc Emire* is especially interesting in terms of the aims and interests of the redactor. R. J. Cormier¹⁷¹ examines the motifs and traditions with regards to Norse influences that may be present in Celtic material.

Philip O'Leary¹⁷² investigates the idea of the identity of a woman's honour with the honour of her husband. Joanne Findon¹⁷³ and William Sayers¹⁷⁴ examine Emer's verbal skills which make her character unique and intriguing.

¹⁶⁷ A. T. Hatto, "On the excellence of Hildebrandslied: a comparative study in dynamics", *The Modern Language Review*, 100 (Supplement), 2005, 19-37.

¹⁶⁸ Raymond J. Cormier, "Cú Chulainn and Ywain: the love hero in early Irish and Old French literature". *Studies in Philology*, 72, (1975), 115-39.

¹⁶⁹ William Sayers, "Martial feats in the Old Irish Ulster Cycle", *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 9, (1983) 45-80.

¹⁷⁰ Gregory Toner, "The transmission of *Tochmarc Emire*". *Ériu*, 49, 1998, 71-88. Pp. 71-88.

¹⁷¹ Raymond J. Cormier, "Early Irish tradition and memory of the Norsemen in 'The Wooing of Emer'", *Studia Hibernica* 9, (1969), 65-75.

¹⁷² Philip O'Leary, "The honour of women in early Irish literature". *Ériu*, 38 (1987), 27-44.

¹⁷³ Joanne Findon, *A Woman's words: Emer and Female Speech in the Ulster Cycle*. Toronto, 1997. See also, "Negotiating female territory: the hero's journey in *Tochmarc Emire*", R. Black, W. Gillies, R. Ó Maolalaigh (eds.), *Celtic Connections*, 507-508.

¹⁷⁴ William Sayers, "Concepts of eloquence in *Tochmarc Emire*", *Studia Celtica*, 26/27, 125-154.

O'Curry¹⁷⁵ suggested *Tochmarc Emire* was one of the most remarkable of all the *tochmarca*; Rudolf Thurneysen¹⁷⁶ noted that it has the most foreign elements of all the Irish sagas,¹⁷⁷ which are obvious in all three versions preserved in the manuscripts. Josef Baudiš¹⁷⁸ examined the plot in terms of themes and motifs that are combined in the narrative.

II.4.4 *Mesca Ulad*

J. Carmichael Watson,¹⁷⁹ whose edition of *Mesca Ulad* is used for the purpose of the present research, studied the relationship between the two fragments that constitute the text in the edition. He noted that MU2, which is much longer, was elaborated and expanded by the redactor. He demonstrates, based on the vocabulary, that some phrases were indeed added by the redactor, as well as that there are some characters in the narrative that were added by the redactor. Uáitéar Mac Gearailt¹⁸⁰ discusses the copyists' emendations that are obvious when paying close attention to different manuscript versions. Áine De Paor¹⁸¹ proposes that the redactor of *Mesca Ulad* possessed considerable skill of narration given the consistency of the text. Rudolf Thurneysen¹⁸² established that the two fragments overlap, meaning that there is a section of the text that is present in both MU1 and MU2, however, the texts are not identical, nor similar enough

¹⁷⁵ Eugene O'Curry, *Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History*, New York, 1861, 278-282.

¹⁷⁶ Rudolf Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 377-395.

¹⁷⁷ Rudolf Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 381.

¹⁷⁸ Josef Baudiš, "On Tochmarc Emire", *Ériu* 9, 1921-1923, 98-108.

¹⁷⁹ J. Carmichael Watson, "Mesca Ulad: the redactor's contribution to the later version", *Ériu* 13, (1942) 95-112.

¹⁸⁰ Uáitéar Mac Gearailt, "The Edinburgh text of Mesca Ulad", *Ériu* 37 (1986), 133-180.

¹⁸¹ Áine De Paor, "The common authorship of some Book of Leinster texts", *Ériu* 9 (1921-23), 118-146.

¹⁸² Rudolf Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 473-84.

to allow for a relatively seamless continuation of the narrative. Eugene O'Curry¹⁸³ argued that *Mesca Ulad* alludes to and describes social habits and manners, and brought to attention the numerous onomastic references.

II.4.5 *Echtra Nerai*

Eugene O'Curry briefly discussed *Echtra Nerai* in connection with *Táin Bó Regamna* in *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*¹⁸⁴ with regards to the treasure in the fountain. Helen Sewell Johnson¹⁸⁵ and G.F. Dalton¹⁸⁶ examine the importance of Samain in the narrative; Johnson emphasizes the closeness between human beings and supernatural beings at the time of Samain, while Dalton looks at the connection between Samain and ritual killings of the Irish kings.

Séamus Ó Duilearga¹⁸⁷ and Jacqueline Ní Fhearghusa¹⁸⁸ draw attention to the parallels between *Echtra Nerai* and *The Devil's Son as Priest*. While Ó Duilearga calls *Echtra Nerai* a 'tale' and thus implies that it is a folktale, Ní Fhearghusa proposes that he might not be entirely correct here on account of its characteristics such as the connection to specific persons and places, as well as the moral lessons they contain, which she says are characteristics that are not typical of a folk tale, but rather of a folk legend.

¹⁸³ Eugene O'Curry, *Lectures on the Manuscript Materials of Ancient Irish History*, New York, 1861, 185-86.

¹⁸⁴ Eugene O'Curry, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, 199-201.

¹⁸⁵ Helen Sewell Johnson, "November eve beliefs and customs in Irish life and literature", *The Journal of American Folklore*, 81 (no. 320) (1968), 133-42.

¹⁸⁶ G. F. Dalton, "The ritual killing of the Irish kings", *Folklore*, Vol. 8/1 (Spring 1970), 1-22.

¹⁸⁷ Séamus Ó Duilearga, "Nera and the dead man", in John Ryan (ed.), *Essays and Studies Presented to Prof. Eoin Mac Neill on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday May 15, 1983*. Dublin, 1940.

¹⁸⁸ Jacqueline Ní Fhearghusa, "The Devil's Son As Priest: distribution, form and function of a story on the borderline between folktale and folk legend", *Béalóideas*, 62/63, 1994/95, 89-108.

Michael Herity¹⁸⁹ discussed the topography of Ráth Crúachain in connection with *Echtra Nerai* and some other tales, providing maps and aerial photographs of the area. According to Herity, Ráth Crúachain seems to have been intended for rituals, which ties in with the idea of a connection between ritual killings of Irish kings at Samain, which Dalton argues is the subject of *Echtra Nerai*. John Westropp¹⁹⁰ contributed to the discussion of topography by examining Temair Luachra. John Waddell¹⁹¹ discusses the pseudo-historical context and character of Ráth Crúachain in connection with several tales including *Echtra Nerai*.

David Dumville¹⁹² and Leonie Duignan¹⁹³ discuss *echtrae* as a genre and touch on the problems of the division of tales in to genres due to overlapping of some genres. Duignan proposes a taxonomy of *echtrae* tales based on their common features.

Rudolf Thurneysen, John Carey¹⁹⁴ and Patricia Ronan examined the structure of *Echtra Nerai*. Thurneysen¹⁹⁵ proposed that *Echtra Nerai* is a narrative merged from two parallel narratives; John Carey, however, argued that *Echtra Nerai* displays a thematic

¹⁸⁹ Michael Herity, "A survey of the royal site of Crúachain in Connacht: introduction, the monuments and topography", *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 113 (1983), 121-142.

¹⁹⁰ John Westropp, "'The Mound of Fianna' at Cromwell Hill, Co. Limerick, and a note on Temair Luachra, *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, 36, (1921-24), 68-85.

¹⁹¹ John Waddell, "A royal site in Connacht", *The Journal of Irish Archaeology* 1 (1983), 21-46.

¹⁹² David Dumville, "Echtrae and Immram: some problems of definition". *Ériu* 27 (1976), 73-94.

¹⁹³ Leonie Duignan, "Echtrae as an early Irish genre", PhD thesis, Dublin, 2010. Published in book form, *The Echtrae as an Irish Literary Genre*, Leidorf, 2011.

¹⁹⁴ John Carey, "Sequence and causation in *Echtra Nerai*". *Ériu* 39, 67-74; "Addendum to "Sequence and causation in *Echtra Nerai*". *Ériu* 40, 194.

¹⁹⁵ Rudolf Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 311-12.

wholeness and unity which renders Thurneysen's proposal unlikely. Patricia Ronan¹⁹⁶ examines the structure, thematic entities and Otherworld time in *Echtra Nerai* and sees at least three obvious thematic entities, namely Nera's adventure with the dead captive and his two visits to the *síd*, which offers a new view on the structure.

II.4.6 *Táin Bó Fraích*

Rudolf Thurneysen¹⁹⁷ observed that *Táin Bó Fraích* consists of two parts that are in contradiction with one another. The contradictions he refers to are the fact that Fróech is expressly stated to be unmarried in the first part, while the beginning of the second part presents him as a married man whose wife and children have been abducted. He argues that *Táin Bó Fraích* seems to consist of two tales, which are joined together in a very visible, obvious manner by the compiler of the text, who must have left out or changed the beginning of the second tale. On the grounds of orthography, he concludes that the alteration of the text took place in the 11th century. The second part of the text is in agreement with the title that classifies the tale as a cattle raid. O'Curry¹⁹⁸ described the scene with the three harpists in the first part of *Táin Bó Fraích*.

James Carney¹⁹⁹ suggests that *Táin Bó Fraích* provides an insight into the perception the Irish had of the outside world. He addresses the problem of the structure and proposes that the author considered the tale historic fiction and that the tale contained

¹⁹⁶ Patricia Ronan, "Aspects of *Echtra Nerai*" (paper).

¹⁹⁷ Rudolf Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 285-95.

¹⁹⁸ Eugene O'Curry, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, Vol. III, 218-222.

¹⁹⁹ James Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History*, Dublin, 1979.

some borrowed material which was adapted to fit the structure. Carney disagreed with Thurneysen's theory that the narrative originally consisted of two tales as the explanation for textual inconsistencies. He suggested that the first part of the narrative was a combination of three different sources, namely *Aided Fergusa*, *Rhydderch's Ring*, and *Vita Columbae*;²⁰⁰ not all of the sources of the second part, which is also a mixture, have survived, but Carney mentions incidents in the Life of St. Samson of Dol as one of them.

Gerard Murphy²⁰¹ considered the state of the narrative as preserved to be the result of a preservation process carried out by a monk, and that the tale was of secular origin. Dewi Wyn Evans²⁰² revisits the idea of borrowed elements in the narrative of *Táin Bó Fraích* and presents several arguments why the elements that Carney had identified as borrowings are unlikely to have been borrowed from the sources given by Carney.

Donald Meek²⁰³ proposed that the compiler was probably familiar with *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, in which Fróech is killed by Cú Chulainn (which would be impossible if Fróech were killed by a monster at the end of the first part of the narrative), and changed the end of the first part of *Táin Bó Fraích* in order to avoid a discrepancy between the two texts.

²⁰⁰ For details, see James Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History*, 35-56.

²⁰¹ Gerard Murphy, *Saga and Myth in Ancient Ireland*.

²⁰² Dewi Wyn Evans, "The learned borrowings claimed for *Táin Bó Fraích*", in Michael Richter and Jean-Michel Picard (eds.), *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in honour of Próinséas Ní Chatháin*, Dublin, 2002, 182—194.

²⁰³ Donald E. Meek, "*Táin Bó Fraích* and other 'Fráech' texts" a study in thematic relationships. Part I", *CMCS* 7 (Summer 1984), 1-37; "*Táin Bó Fraích* and other 'Fráech' texts" a study in thematic relationships. Part II", *CMCS* 8 (Winter 1984), 65-85.

II.4.7 *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*

Eugene O'Curry²⁰⁴ examined the occurrence of the word *cepóc* 'panegyric' in several tales including *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*. Rudolf Thurneysen²⁰⁵ noted the numerous onomastic tales in the text.

Cornelius Buttimer²⁰⁶ suggested that there may be a connection between *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó* and *Talland Étair* in terms of the defence of the honour and prestige of Leinster. Bianca Ross²⁰⁷ comments on the heroic aspect of *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó* in the light of the Irish version of the Hercules legend produced by the 15th century scribe Uilliam mac an Leg(h)a.

II.4.8 *Longes Mac n-Uislenn*

Rudolf Thurneysen²⁰⁸ and Vernam Hull²⁰⁹ drew attention to the title *Aithed Derdrinne (Derdrenn) re macc (maccaib) Uislenn (Usnig)* in one of the tale lists, namely List A edited by Mac Cana.²¹⁰ Thurneysen proposed that this title denoted the tale that is today known as *Longes Mac n-Uislenn*; Vernam Hull²¹¹ allowed the possibility that the tale in List A could be a different tale. He stated that there existed two very different

²⁰⁴ Eugene O'Curry, *Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish*, Vol. III, 373.

²⁰⁵ Rudolf Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 494-500.

²⁰⁶ Cornelius Buttimer, "Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó: a reappraisal", *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, Vol. 2 (1982), 61-73.

²⁰⁷ Bianca Ross, "The transformation of non-Irish narratives into an Irish context: Uilliam Mac an Lega's Early Modern adaptation of the story of Hercules", *Studia Hibernica*, 29 (1995-97), 185-193.

²⁰⁸ Rudolf Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 322-34.

²⁰⁹ Vernam Hull (ed.), *Longes Mac n-Uislenn: The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu*, New York, 1949.

²¹⁰ Proinsias Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, 41 ff.

²¹¹ Vernam Hull (ed.), *Longes Mac n-Uislenn: The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu*, 1.

versions of the saga with two different titles. The earlier one was known as *Longes Mac n-Uislenn*, while the later version bore the title *Oided Mac N-Uisnig* or *Oidhe Chloinne Uisneach* and only occurred in manuscripts that are earlier than the beginning of the 16th century. James Carney²¹² saw a connection with ‘Tristan-type tales and considered it “a literary addition to a pre-existing saga cycle”.²¹³

Anne Lea²¹⁴ examines the motive of a love triangle that occurs in several Irish tales including *Longes Mac n-Uislenn*, as well as in the Welsh tale *Pwyll*, suggesting that sexual abstinence on the part of the soldier may have been favoured to keep the soldier’s attention on combat-related matters, and that such abstinence would have been rewarded as in the tales she examined. Philip O’Leary²¹⁵ proposes that Derdriu does not understand the reasons for Fergus’s actions (regarding his attending the banquets when he is acting as a guarantor for the sons of Uisliu) and the fact that he is caught between honour-related duties that are in conflict with one another. Máire Herbert²¹⁶ examined *Longes Mac n-Uislenn* in the light of the departure from the conventions of the time as evidenced by the fact that Derdriu approaches Noísiu and chooses him as a spouse, and from the point of view of the relationships between men and women in the narrative.

²¹² James Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History*, 232-43.

²¹³ James Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History*, 234.

²¹⁴ Anne Lea, “Love, sex and the mercenary soldier”, *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, Vol. 12 (1992), 207-12.

²¹⁵ Philip O’Leary, “The honour of women in early Irish literature”, *Ériu*, 38 (1987), 27-44.

²¹⁶ Maire Herbert, “Celtic heroine? The archaeology of the Deirdre story”, in T. O’Brien Johnson and D. Cairns (eds.), *Gender in Irish Writing*, Philadelphia (1991), 13-22; “The universe of male and female: a reading of the Deirdre story”, C. J. Byrne, M. Henry and P. Ó Siadhail, *Celtic Languages and Celtic Peoples: Proceedings of the Second North American Congress of Celtic Studies*, Halifax (1992), 53-64.

II. 5 Oral tradition and story-telling

Storytelling is as old and as widespread as human culture. Throughout history, storytelling has been part of the narrative tradition of probably all existing cultures, in every known language, and a source of delight to audiences of any age or social background. A good story, and a well-told one, is never trivial, regardless of how often its theme has been used before, how old it is, what its message might be, or how often the story itself has been told, or why.

In the heroic period, literature was mainly produced for two reasons, namely those of education and instruction. Even stories of entertainment contained political significance, which could, according to the situation and need, be changed, reformulated, and needed to be interpreted by a person who was qualified to do so.²¹⁷ In Ireland and Wales, storytelling was part of poetic art, and poetic art itself was considered a discipline and a profession. It was a means of handing down the tradition, and of educating the custodians of the tradition. Celtic literature is well known for its imaginative quality; it often features the Otherworld, visions, extreme heroism, and as such continues to amaze and attract scholars and people in general. The assumptions underlying such characterization have been criticized by Patrick Sims Williams.²¹⁸

As far as the composition of oral literature is concerned, one needs to bear in mind some factors such as the training needed to commit the material to memory, the

²¹⁷ See Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, 7-9.

²¹⁸ Patrick Sims-Williams, "The Visionary Celt: The Construction of an 'Ethnic Preconception'", *CMCS* 11 (Summer 1986), 71-96.

situation in which a poem or tale is performed (interaction with the audience, adapting etc.), variability, and the memory aids used, such as formulae. Albert B. Lord²¹⁹ assigned great importance to the formula:

[t]he poetic grammar of oral epic is and must be based on the formula. It is a grammar of parataxis and of frequently used and useful phrases. Usefulness in composition carries no opposition of opprobrium. Quite the contrary. Without this usefulness the style, and, more important, the whole practice would collapse or would never have been born. The singer's mode of composition is dictated by the demands of performance at high speed, and he depends upon inculcated habit and association of sounds, words, phrases, and lines. He does not shrink from the habitual; nor does he either require the fixed for memorization or seek the unusual for its own sake.²²⁰

Albert Lord and Milman Parry considered the formulaic structure a definite sign of oral composition. Ruth Finnegan,²²¹ however, refers to several scholars who demonstrated that some written Old English compositions, as well as translations, exhibit a formulaic style. It has been accepted that formulaic style was used in both oral and written compositions, and that it does not prove indisputably that a composition was oral.

It has already been mentioned how important the story-telling was considered to be in medieval Wales and Ireland. A large body of the Celtic heroic tradition was told in prose sagas interspersed with memorised verse passages, which may often have been much older than the prose itself.²²² The primary element in that literature is found in the celebration of an exploit performed by the hero by means of his courage and strength, which enable him to acquire fame. Occasionally, a secondary interest can be found in the

²¹⁹ Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1964.

²²⁰ Albert B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales*, 65.

²²¹ Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance and Social Context*, Cambridge, London, New York, Melbourne, 1977, 69-72.

²²² See Tony Conran, 'The ballad and Taliesin', *CMCS* 28 (Winter 1994), 1-24 (p. 2). The evidence for this in Wales, however, is circumstantial. See Jenny Rowland, *Early Welsh Saga Poetry*, Cambridge, 1990.

exploits of the community to which the hero belongs. A pronounced individual interest, both as shown by the poet or narrator, and as attributed to the characters themselves, is an outstanding feature of Celtic heroic literature.

There is no undisputable proof of the way Celtic heroic literature was transmitted in its early stages; it is generally accepted that the transmission must have been oral up to a certain point in its development. Oral literature is found in three kinds of communities.²²³ Firstly, in communities where the art of writing is entirely unknown; secondly, in communities where writing is known and used for certain purposes, such as correspondence, denoting ownership, for purposes of trade, or for magical purposes, but not for purposes of literature (that is, written literature is unknown); and thirdly, in communities where written literature is also current. J. E. Caerwyn Williams proposed the following definition of oral poetry:

[...] to qualify as oral, poetry must meet one or more conditions: it must be orally composed, orally communicated, or orally transmitted.²²⁴

There is no concrete evidence of literary transmission of poetry or prose in the early period in Wales, at least not before the 9th/10th century in the case of poetry. It is generally believed, however, that prior to committing the early poetry and prose tales to writing, they were communicated and transmitted orally; Brynley Roberts stated that, if out of nothing else but necessity, “the earliest Welsh literary tradition was an oral one”²²⁵

²²³ H. M. Chadwick and N. K. Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature*, Vol. III, (Cambridge, 1940), 645ff.

²²⁴ J. E. Caerwyn Williams, *The Court Poet in Medieval Wales. An Essay*, Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter, 1997, 8.

²²⁵ Brynley Roberts, *Studies on Middle Welsh Literature*, Lewiston, New York, 1992, 1.

and that for an uncertain period of time, oral and written transmission existed simultaneously.²²⁶ J. E. Caerwyn Williams suggested that

scribal communication must have been exceptional at this early date. The common practice must have been oral communication either by the poet himself or by a deputy.²²⁷

Kenneth Jackson also supported the idea that writing was absent in the process of composing and handing down of Celtic poetry in general.²²⁸

Ifor Williams proposed that, for the transmission of sagas, the storyteller knew his repertoire by heart, at least the main points of the stories, and at least in the early stages of the tradition, and that as long as the *englynion*²²⁹ were told at the appropriate moment and with proper accuracy, it was not necessary for him to be able to reproduce the story verbatim every time it was told. He discussed the possibility of literate storytellers committing the material into writing:

[i]f he distrusted his memory he could write them down on vellum, and by doing so would make it certain that these verse elements of the saga would be preserved intact for centuries, and that in their earliest and most primitive form. Later copyists might bungle their job, mis-copying through carelessness, or might deliberately and of choice change the orthography and substitute more modern words for those which had become obsolete or obscure in the course of time.²³⁰

²²⁶ See also Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Poetry*, pp. 8 ff., for more on the parallels and overlaps of oral and written poetry.

²²⁷ J. E. Caerwyn Williams, *The Court Poet in Medieval Wales. An Essay*, 8.

²²⁸ See Kenneth H. Jackson, Jackson, *The Gododdin: the Oldest Scottish Poem*, Edinburgh, 1978, 60 ff.

²²⁹ "The *englyn* was a metre common in early Welsh mediaeval verse, and found in poems which are among the oldest known in the language. [...] The early *englyn* consists in essence of a stanza of three rhyming lines of a certain number of syllables. Within narrow limits, there is some latitude in the number of these, but the principle of the rhythm is syllabic and not accentual. There are two chief types, called in Welsh *milwr* and *penfyr*." Kenneth Jackson, "Incremental Repetition in the Early Welsh *Englyn*", *Speculum*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Jul., 1941), 304.

²³⁰ Ifor Williams, *Lectures on Early Welsh Poetry*, Dublin, 1944, 23.

Sioned Davies argued that the tales of *The Mabinogion* “are not written versions of oral stories, but rather the result of composition-in-writing”,²³¹ with the authors “drawing on oral materials,”²³² and the purpose of composing medieval written text being largely that of oral delivery. Ruth Finnegan discarded the idea of “pure and uncontaminated ‘oral culture’” as a myth and argues the existence of both oral and written literature continuing side by side.²³³

In early Celtic societies, the bard was a custodian of historical records in the earliest form in which these were embodied: they contained genealogies of patrons. As a panegyrist, he was also a professional propagandist, and as such a belonged to a highly influential social class in both war and peace.

Heroic literature, both prose and praise poetry, in its own way also recorded history. Praise poetry, for example, validated the king’s rule and portrayed him in twofold fashion: as he was seen by their (either loving or fearful) subjects, and as a role model, as an ideal king with all the characteristics and behaviour desired and prescribed by people and laws. The same could be said for prose tales, although neither genre should be taken as an absolutely valid or reliable document of history. They can, however, throw some light on certain historical practices, customs, or events. Poetry occasionally included lists of battles (for example *The Poems of Taliesin XI*)²³⁴, or lists of ancestors.

²³¹ Sioned Davies, “Written text as performance: the implications for Middle Welsh prose narratives”, in Huw Pryce (ed.), *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies*, Cambridge, 1988, 133-48 (p. 134).

²³² Sioned Davies, “Written text as performance: the implications for Middle Welsh prose narratives”, Huw Pryce (ed.), *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies*, Cambridge, 1988, 133-48 (p. 134).

²³³ Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Poetry*, 23-4.

²³⁴ Ifor Williams and J. E. Caerwyn Williams (eds.), *The Poems of Taliesin*, Dublin, 1968.

As an important member of highly structured hierarchy, the poet was a man of knowledge and belonged to the dynasty. He spread and increased the fame and power of his king. At the same time, he recorded, created and transmitted history and genealogy; he amused and celebrated his king, reminded his audience of what they had in their king and of their duties to him, threatened and warned enemies to bow before him, and reminded the king of his own duties. The poet's own interests in terms of well-being were strongly present; he openly asked for payment for his craft, often skilfully manipulating his benefactor into greater generosity.²³⁵ His role is not to be underestimated:

He combines in himself the functions, or parts of the functions of several professions or orders in the Celtic world. He is a craftsman [...]²³⁶

Such skilful manipulation can be seen in the Fourth Branch when Gwydion asks Pryderi to reward his craft according to his performance:

Ac ar diwed hynny, "Arglwyd," heb ef, "ae guell y gwna neb wy neges i wrthyt ti no mu uu hun?" "Na well," heb ynteu. "Tauawt lawn da yw y teu di." "Llyna uy neges inheu, Arglwyd, ymadolwyn a thidi am yr aniueileit a anuonet it o Annwryn."²³⁷

By drawing attention to his craft and his status as a *pencerdd*, Gwydion skilfully manipulates the king into doing just what he wants him to do.

Storytelling was part of poetic art, which in turn was itself considered a discipline and a profession. And a respected one it was, with certain obligations such as entertaining

²³⁵ This is evident for example in in *The Poems of Taliesin III*.

²³⁶ Ifor Williams, *Lectures on Early Welsh Poetry*, Dublin, 1944, 10.

²³⁷ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 69.

When that was over, "Lord," said Gwydion, "can anyone deliver my request to you better than I myself?" "No indeed," said Pryderi. Yours is a very good tongue." "Then this is my request, lord: to ask you for the animals that were sent to you from Annwfn." (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 49)

the court, as Gwydion did in the above extract from *Math*. Gwydion referred to himself as *pencerdd*, ‘master bard, chaired bard, chief bard or poet; master musician, chief musician’; the text also refers to him as *cyfarwydd*, ‘story-teller; leader, guide, well-informed person, expert’.²³⁸ A *pencerdd* was not necessarily always strictly a poet; he could also be a storyteller (Gwydion, however, seems to fulfil both roles), or an instrumental performer.²³⁹ Gwydion’s statement seems to imply that there must have been some kind of hierarchy among the members of the class of the poet in Medieval Wales, perhaps similar in its structure to that in Medieval Ireland, and raises the question of the different ranks of poets, and their education and training. There is very little evidence or information concerning the requirements of different ranks of poets, and the relationships between different ranks, unlike in Ireland. To an extent, law books deal with the issue of the position of the *bardd teulu* in the court, but they do not offer sufficient insight into the matter.

According to the laws of Hywel Dda,²⁴⁰ there were three kinds of poets – *pencerdd*, *bardd teulu*, and *cerddor*. Little is known about their training and education, but it seems that in order to become a *pencerdd*, a poet had to win a chair in a bardic competition, which made him head of the bardic guild of his area, although not an officer of court (rather a guest of honour). The training of young *cerddorion* was one of his

²³⁸ See also Sioned Davies, “Written text as performance”; Brynley Roberts, *Studies on Middle Welsh Literature*, 2ff; Patrick K. Ford, “The poet as *cyfarwydd* in early Welsh tradition” for a detailed discussion.

²³⁹ See Dafydd Jenkins, “Bardd teulu and pencerdd”, in T. M. Charles-Edwards, Morfydd E. Owen, Paul Russell (eds.), *The Welsh King and his Court*, Cardiff, 2000, 161.

²⁴⁰ Although the manuscripts date from the 13th century, the law texts themselves are earlier. Some sections may indeed contain material as old as the 10th century, although this is far from certain. See Edwards, *Dafydd ap Gwilym: Influences and Analogues*, Oxford, 1996. 4-5.

functions, as was singing two poems at feasts (one to God and one to the patron²⁴¹). The *bardd teulu*, who was an officer of court, sung the third poem at feasts, sung to the queen, and to the warband during their preparation for a battle, and occasionally also during their raids.

The Bardic Grammar of Einion Offeiriad (fl. c. 1330) distinguishes three kinds of *cerddor*: *clerwr* (apparently considered of such low status that it was not mentioned in the lawbooks), *teuluwr*, and *prydydd*. The traditional interpretation, according to Dafydd Jenkins, makes the following assumptions about the *teuluwr* and the *prydydd*:

[f]irst, that *pencerdd* and *prydydd* are alternative names for the same kind of bard; second, that *pencerdd* and *bardd teulu* were different grades of the same category; third, that there was an obligatory difference between the subjects and metres appropriate to each. [...] [T]he lawbooks are not telling us what verse the two classes were entitled to compose: their concern is with their contribution to the entertainment at the feast, and it is easy to understand that, after the *pencerdd* has displayed his esoteric gift, the not-too-sober audience would like something lighter. Hence if *pencerdd* and *bardd teulu* composed different kinds of verse, they did so because of their different relation to the court, rather than under any compulsion of status. For as to the second assumption, we shall see that the lawbooks indicate that the essential difference between *pencerdd* and *bardd teulu* was a difference in their relation to the court. And of the first assumption it must be said that the two names seem to belong to two different milieux, represented by the Grammars and the lawbook: it is not an accident that the word *prydydd* is not found in the lawbooks, and that the few examples of *pencerdd* in the Grammars show that it was not an elegant variation on *prydydd*.²⁴²

Bardd teulu and *pencerdd* were by their status two main types of poets, the main difference between them being that the *bardd teulu* was a court official, while the

²⁴¹ For more detail, see Dafydd Jenkins, “Bardd teulu and pencerdd”, in T. M. Charles-Edwards, Morfydd E. Owen, Paul Russell (eds.), *The Welsh King and his Court*, Cardiff, 2000, 142-66.

²⁴² Dafydd Jenkins, “Bardd teulu and pencerdd”, T. M. Charles-Edwards, Morfydd E. Owen, Paul Russell (eds.), *The Welsh King and his Court*, Cardiff, 2000, 143-4.

pencerdd was not,²⁴³ although the three main redactions of the Laws of Court do not provide identical information.²⁴⁴ (The Iorwerth Redaction lists both *bardd teulu* and *pencerdd* as court officers, while the Blegywryd Redaction and the Cyfnerth Redaction only list *bardd teulu*.²⁴⁵ It is evident from the differences between the above mentioned redactions that there must have been changes in the circumstances of the court during the period of development of the lawbooks. Jenkins provides a detailed survey²⁴⁶ of the Laws of Court according to the three Redactions in regard of the rights and obligations of the *bardd teulu*.

While the poems and the laws provide different terms for poets, it is unclear whether or not these terms defined classes of poets and their functions. Rowland notes,

[c]learly, although the *bardd teulu* was not of the same rank as the *pencerdd* in the laws, he was an important official in his own right, and by no stretch of imagination could be called a lower class poet.²⁴⁷

Undoubtedly, the status of the poet must have changed with time, as demonstrated by the difference between the three Redactions.

²⁴³ See also Lynch, “Court poetry”, 171.

²⁴⁴ See Jenkins, “Bardd teulu”, 19.

²⁴⁵ Lynch (“Court poetry”, 171) states that despite the Blegywryd Redaction not showing the *pencerdd* as a court official, “a comprehensive survey of all the major redactions shows the *pencerdd* to have been increasingly drawn into the activities and organisation of the court”.

²⁴⁶ See Dafydd Jenkins, “Bardd teulu and pencerdd”, T. M. Charles-Edwards, Morfydd E. Owen, Paul Russell (eds.), *The Welsh King and his Court*, Cardiff, 2000, 147 for the rights of the *bardd teulu* according to the three Redactions, and 152 – the rights of the *pencerdd*.

²⁴⁷ Jenny Rowland, *Early Welsh Saga Poetry: a Study and edition of the Englynion*, Cambridge, 1990, 360, footnote 124.

Rachel Bromwich²⁴⁸ and Jenny Rowland also suggest that the Welsh triads possibly provide some evidence that there may have been a difference between bards who also practised warfare, and warrior-princes who also practised bardism.²⁴⁹

Being present at the court was not one of the *pencerdd*'s obligations, nor could he claim the right to it; at the same time, his presence could not be claimed by the ruler, nor would the ruler be obliged to welcome a *pencerdd*. At a feast, however, he was given a place of honour and was invited to be the first to perform. In relation to the *cyfarwydd*, the *pencerdd* seems to have been the highest sort of poet, while the *cyfarwydd* seems to have composed different (less complicated) verse and to have used different metres, and also fulfil the role of an entertainer. A common opinion has it that *englyn* was a form practised by a lower class of bards (perhaps even *clêr*)²⁵⁰ – not by the *pencerdd* but perhaps by the *cyfarwydd*.²⁵¹ On the subject of bardic ranks and types of verse different ranks composed, Jackson states,

The art poets of Wales, the bards of high rank, whose complicated and learned verse was addressed only to their princely patrons, did not make use of the simple [*englyn*] *milwr* and *penfryn* metres. These were used characteristically, it seems, by the professional entertainers, the *cyfarwyddiad*, whose stock of traditional prose tales and verse (*cyfarwyddyd*) was the amusement of prince, squire, and serving-man alike. The distinction is more a formal than a cultural or social one, and a bard might himself act as a *cyfarwyddiad* [sic] on occasion.²⁵²

It seems that the choice of verse was connected to the poet's place in the hierarchy of poetic orders. From the later period, R. Geraint Gruffydd²⁵³ gives the example of Y

²⁴⁸ Rachel Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydain*, TYP 11 and 12.

²⁴⁹ See Jenny Rowland, *Saga Poetry*, 356.

²⁵⁰ See Jenny Rowland, *Saga Poetry*, 357.

²⁵¹ See also Ifor Williams, *The Beginnings of Welsh Poetry*, Chapter 8.

²⁵² Jackson, "Incremental repetition in the Early Welsh *Englyn*", *Speculum*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Jul., 1941), 317.

²⁵³ R. Geraint Gruffydd, "The early court poet of South Wales", *SC* 14/14 (1978-80), 95-105.

Prydydd Bychan (13th ct.) and argues that he clearly must have regarded himself as a *bardd teulu* (and not a *pencerdd*) since all his work is *englynion*, and that his choice of metre and subject matter hint at his political superiority.

Bromwich in *Trioedd Ynys Prydein* states that the *pencerdd* might at some stage have taken on the role of the *cyfarwydd*. However, there is no evidence or material offering a satisfactory explanation of how prose tales were passed on from generation to generation until they were written down. The argument proposed by Rachel Bromwich supports the generally accepted assumption (subscribed to by the majority of scholars, including Sir Ifor Williams) that prose material was (primarily) transmitted by the *cyfarwydd*, and the term was generally accepted to mean “story-teller”. Whether or not the *cyfarwydd* was a special grade of bard or a separate profession remains unclear. Consequently, following the analogy, it was accepted that *cyfarwyddyd* refers to stories or tales, therefore to what is today recognised as prose. Patrick Ford²⁵⁴ offered a new interpretation of the existing material and drew attention to the fact that automatically assuming that terms *cyfarwyddyd* should (always) be interpreted as “stories” or “old tales”, and *cyfarwydd* as “storyteller”, was incorrect. He sought to examine possible meanings of the word *cyfarwyddyd*, and in relation to that, those of *cyfarwydd*, in early medieval Wales, and to disprove the theory that they always refer to prose tales or stories, or determine the teller of them as a necessarily lesser poet.

Following the discussion offered by Rachel Bromwich in *Trioedd Ynys Prydein*, Ford once again raises the question of the connection between the Welsh *bardd* and the

²⁵⁴ Patrick K. Ford, “The Poet as *Cyfarwydd* in Early Welsh Tradition”, SC X/XI, tt. 152-62.

cyfarwydd (in the meaning of “narrator of tales, story-teller”, or in modern Welsh, “chwedlewr, ystorïwr, adroddwr chwedlau er diddanwch, gŵr wrth ei grefft gynt yn difyrru â chwedlau”;²⁵⁵ he also brings in the uncertainty of attributing story-telling to the *bardd* and of assuming that the term *cyfarwyddyd* is a pure synonym for *ystorïau* or *chwedlau*, and questions the interpretations of these issues that prevailed at the time. In the absence of clear evidence proving that *cyfarwyddyd* was always synonymous with *ystorïau* and *hen chwedlau*, and whether or not story-telling was a function of a story-teller or a poet, he questions the very interpretation and understanding of the word *cyfarwyddyd* as such, and tries to establish other possible meanings that would provide a different understanding of the text and offer a better understanding of the role and position of the *cyfarwydd* in medieval Welsh society. He introduces the problematic nature of the terms *cyfarwydd* and *cyfarwyddyd* as understood in the meaning of “story-teller” and “tale” by quoting the well-known passage²⁵⁶ from *Math fab Mathonwy* as translated by Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, and reminding the reader of the lack of “evidence for the practice of ‘story-telling’ in medieval Wales”²⁵⁷ and that very little is known about their performances of the *bardd* and the *pencerdd*, or indeed of the literary form that underlay the performances. He draws the attention to the fact that early Irish sagas were interspersed with poetry, but that in Wales,

the union of prose and verse in bardic lore cannot be unequivocally shown,

²⁵⁵ *GPC*, 685.

²⁵⁶ The passage, as quoted by Ford in the article, from the 1949 edition: “Gwydion was placed at Pryderi’s one hand that night. “Why,” said Pryderi, “gladly would we have a tale [*cyfarwyddyd*] from some of the young men yonder.” “Lord,” said Gwydion, “it is a custom with us that the first night after one comes to a great man, the chief bard shall have the say [*dywedyd* o’r pencerdd].” Gwydion was the best teller of tales [*gorau cyfarwyff*] in the world. And that night he entertained the court with pleasant tales and story-telling [*ymddiddanau digrif a chyfarwyddyd*].

²⁵⁷ See Ford, “The poet as *cyfarwydd*”, 152-4.

and one is struck by the fact that only five *englynion* are found in the entire four branches of the Mabinogion.²⁵⁸

He suggests that Rachel Bromwich's argument that the *pencerdd* may once have told stories was perhaps incorrect, as well as her suggestion that poets and story-tellers belonged to separate orders. He also opposes Rowlands' interpretation that *cyfarwyddyd* means "*chwedl*".²⁵⁹

Ford proposed that the Welsh bard must have had access to the knowledge of tradition presented in triadic form, which he used for composing verse in the court, and that to some extent, the *ystoriwr* used the same source of material for his craft. This source of knowledge would have included, according to his understanding of a passage from *The History of Gruffydd ap Cynan*, genealogy and *rhandiroedd* ("territorial unit, in the Welsh laws") and "served as the basis or the raw materials from which the author constructed his *ystoria*".²⁶⁰ He suggests that both the Welsh bard and the Irish poet were in possession of great knowledge and that, judging from the amount of versified lore in *Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin* and *Llyfr Coch Hergest*, the Irish poets and the Welsh bards resembled one another in activity, with the exception of story-telling. Ford explains the various meanings assigned by *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru* to the word *cyfarwydd* by developing the following argument:

Cyfarwydd is derived from **kom-are-uid-*, where the root is the same as in Irish *imbas*, and the two prefixes are intensifiers. Its general meaning, then, like *imbas*, is "very great, intensive knowledge". From such a semantic base, there is no difficulty about any of the meanings given by the GPC: "skilled, knowledgeable, known, acquainted" or, as a noun, "expert, story-teller, historian, guide"; with the abstract noun suffix *-yd*, "knowledge, instruction, information". However, the

²⁵⁸ Ford, "The poet as *cyfarwydd*", 153.

²⁵⁹ Ford is referring to Eurys Rowlands' review of *Trioedd Ynys Prydein* in *Llên Cymru VI*.

²⁶⁰ Ford, "The poet as *cyfarwydd*", 154.

meaning “story-teller” cites the passage in *Math* as its earliest source.²⁶¹

The above-mentioned passage from the Fourth Branch is the material on which Rachel Bromwich based the assumption that the *pencerdd* may once have entertained his patron by telling stories like the Irish *fili* once did.²⁶² Going back to the Welsh laws, Ford suggests that Gwydion refers to the tradition of the *pencerdd* singing to the king,²⁶³ supporting his argument with the Latin text of the laws, which includes words *carmen/carmina* “song/songs”, and *cantare/cantet* “to sing, should sing”. Therefore, he concludes, Gwydion may not have entertained the court with tales, but with versified lore. Another conclusion drawn from this argument is that

[i]f the *pencerdd*, the highest ranking poet, recited *cyfarwyddyd*, then in the absence of any direct testimony that the *pencerdd* ever recited *hen ystorïau* or *chwedlau*, we must assume that *cyfarwyddyd* here has a poetic dress. The same is true of the word *cyfarwydd*. Whatever it came to mean later, there is no evidence that the poet as *cyfarwydd* (“expert, possessor of great knowledge”) ever told stories – except, perhaps, out of court.²⁶⁴

In addition to providing a new, more detailed understanding of the word *cyfarwydd*, Ford then draws a parallel between Irish *imbis* as used in *Táin Bó Cualnge* and *cyfarwyddyd* as used in *Math*, suggesting that both of them denote “a performance by the poet from his store of very great knowledge”.²⁶⁵ Basing his argument on *Trioedd Ynys Prydein* and on the Welsh law, he argues that *cyfarwyddyd* cannot mean “tales” but only material for them, and that a connection similar to that between tales and *cyfarwyddyd* must have existed between poetry and *cyfarwyddyd*. He defines any ‘prosy records’ as material that

²⁶¹ Ford, “The poet as *cyfarwydd*”, 155.

²⁶² See Bromwich, *TYP*, lxxxv.

²⁶³ See Jenkins, “Bardd teulu and *pencerdd*”, 147.

²⁶⁴ Ford, “The poet as *cyfarwydd*”, 157.

²⁶⁵ Ford, “The poet as *cyfarwydd*”, 155.

served “for poets to inform their poems”²⁶⁶ [...] just as poetry was informed by lore contained in the *hengerdd*, *ystoriau* and *barddoniaeth*” *Cyfarwyddyd*, therefore, was that which increased the inspiration of song. This argument leads him to the conclusion that there are different meanings attached to the word *cyfarwydd* as it occurs in the Four Branches: depending on the context, it can mean either “information about nobility and division of lands”, “lore”, or “verse performance”.²⁶⁷

Scholarly opinion is very much divided here, and there are no clear answers to be had regarding the difference between the *bardd teulu* and the *cyfarwydd*, and whether or not the former could fulfil both roles. It has to be noted that the earliest record of the word *cyfarwydd*, in Chad 3, from the 8th/9th century, suggests that it could mean ‘legal expert’.²⁶⁸ In both Irish and Welsh traditions, story-telling was present, and it is agreed that what there is left of prose tales must have been handed down orally, at least until written versions appeared. In the case of Irish tradition, it is relatively easy to explain how the stories were passed on from one generation to the next, and who the guardian of that tradition was. The Welsh tradition is not so easy to explain. The existing material does not offer enough information that would allow for any solid explanation of how oral stories were preserved and spread in the first place. Not much is known about bardic schools and poetic orders in medieval Wales; material regarding the Irish tradition of bardic orders and training is quite rich and detailed. It is generally accepted that by analogy with the Irish model, it must have been the poet who transmitted the stories,

²⁶⁶ Ford 155.

²⁶⁷ For a detailed explanation, see Ford, “The poet as *cyfarwydd*”, 158-9.

²⁶⁸ See Dafydd Jenkins and Morfydd Owen, “The Welsh marginalia in the Litchfield Gospels”, *CMCS* 5 (Summer 1983), 53-4. I am indebted to Dr. Simon Rodway for drawing my attention to this.

although it was not clear what grade he would have been, or what training he would have required. There is an abundance of material bearing witness to the state of affairs relating to the conservation of tales and other literary material in medieval Ireland. Quite the opposite can be said about Wales. It is generally accepted that the Welsh tradition is almost, if not wholly, impossible to understand without the knowledge of and comparison with the Irish tradition. To quote J. E. Caerwyn Williams,

[n]i ellir deall y cyfeiriadau at y pencerdd yn y cyfreithiau Cymraeg heb edrych ar nodweddion swyddogaeth yr *ollam*, y prif *fili*, y prifardd yn Iwerddon gan fod y dystiolaeth Wyddeleg amdano gymaint yn llawnach a'i gysylltiad â'i ragflaenwyr Celtaidd, y *bardoi*, y *vates* a'r *druides*, gymaint yn fwy eglur.²⁶⁹

The debate about the role and importance of the Welsh *pencerdd* presupposes that he was an equivalent of the Irish *fili*; Patrick Ford's article, however, implies that there may have been an important difference between the two with regard to story-telling. Patrick Sims-Williams advises caution about assuming that the Welsh poet would have had the same function as the Irish poet.²⁷⁰

Early and medieval Irish story-telling, as known to us today, originates from manuscript versions of the tales.²⁷¹ The tales, usually a mixture of prose and verse, are believed to have been transmitted orally before they were committed to writing; indeed, it

²⁶⁹ J. E. Caerwyn Williams, "Beirdd y Tywysogion, Arolwg", in *Llên Cymru*, XI (1970/71), 11.

It is impossible to understand the references to *pencerdd* in the Welsh Laws without looking at the characteristics of the role of *ollam*, the chief *fili*, the chief poet of Ireland, as presented by the Irish evidence about him; his contact with his Celtic precedents, the *bardoi*, the *vates*, and the *druides*, was so much fuller and so much clearer. (Translation mine.)

²⁷⁰ Patrick Sims-Williams, "Gildas and vernacular poetry", in Michael Lapidge and David Dumville (eds.), *Gildas: New Approaches*, Woodbridge, 1984, 169-92 (especially 173-74); see also Simon Rodway, "Celtic - definitions, problems and controversies", in Lyudmil Vagalinski (ed.), *In Search of Celtic Tyllis in Thrace* (III C BC), Sofia, 2010, 9-32 (especially 23).

²⁷¹ See Murphy, *Saga and Myth in Ancient Ireland*, 10-11.

is generally taken for a fact that Irish narrative tradition used to be oral. Thurneysen, in *Die irische Helden- und Königsage bis zum 17. Jahrhundert*, proposed that while the transmission of the sagas was one of the main duties of the *fili*, it is also quite certain that many authors, or creators of those sagas and tales came from the class of the *fili*:

So vielseitig waren die *fili*, sei es in Wirklichkeit, sei es nach der Darstellung der Sagen, deren Überlieferung als eine ihrer Hauptpflichten betrachtete wurde. Es ist aber nicht zu bezweifeln, daß auch die meisten Verfasser und Erfinder neuer Sagen in ihrem Kreise zu suchen sind. Bei manchen poetischen ist das ohne weiteres klar, indem die *fili* entweder im Gedicht selber ihren Namen anbringen oder die Herkunft sonst glaubwürdig überliefert ist. Die Prosasagen pflegen freilich keinen Verfasser zu nennen; wollen doch auch die neu erfundenen angeblich nur Altüberliefertes darstellen. [...] Daß aber auch die Prosasagen auf *fili* zurückgehen, zeigt sich schon durch die vielen eingestreuten Gedichte, die ja nur ein *fili* oder ein Barde gestalten konnte.²⁷²

Mac Cana, however, disagreed, and saw in the *fili* primarily the preserver and interpreter of tales:

‘He is no *fili* who does not preserve *coimgne* and all the stories’ (the exclusive negative of this latter statement becomes something of a commonplace in referring to branches of knowledge which are held to be in one sense or another the preserve of the *fili*). There is no hint here of the role of the *baird* or of the monastic *littérateurs* in the cultivation of prose composition in Irish. Rather does it give the impression, as no doubt it was designed to do, that the world of saga belonged to the *fili*; [...] for Thurneysen the *fili* is not only the conservator and interpreter of the older tales, but he is also the creator of new ones: ‘Es ist aber nicht zu bezweifeln, dass auch die meisten Verfasser und Erfinder neuer Sagen in ihrem Kreise zu suchen sind.’ That the great Thurneysen should have permitted himself such a sweeping, not to say indefensible, statement, is surely eloquent testimony to the *fili*’s success in imposing his own conception of himself upon generations of modern scholars.²⁷³

²⁷² Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 71-2.

The *fili* were very versatile, be it in reality or in accordance with the presentation of the sagas whose tradition was considered one of their main duties. Undoubtedly, the majority of authors and inventors of new sagas are to be found in their midst. With many a poetic, this is clear without hesitation, in that the *fili* either put his name in the poem itself, or its background was reliably transmitted. Admittedly, the prose legends tend to not name the author, however they also want to portray even the newly-invented sagas as belonging to the old tradition. [...] The fact that even prose sagas go back to the *fili* is evident already by the many poems scattered within them, which could only be created by a *fili* or a bard. (Translation mine.)

²⁷³ Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, 130-1.

Thurneysen also believed that the Irish narrative tradition mainly used to be transmitted orally until the eighth or ninth century, but started to be transmitted in manuscripts from that period onwards. Supposedly it was often the *fili* himself who committed the tales to writing:

Woher die Sammelhandschriften der Klöster ihren Inhalt nahmen, geben sie in der Regel nicht an, oder wenn sie Quellen nennen, so sind es meist deutlich wieder Klosterhandschriften. Aber die ersten Niederschriften sind wohl nicht so entstanden, daß ein Klostereinsasse einem *fili* seine Geschichten abgefragt hat, sondern wir werden eher anzunehmen haben, daß manche *fili* sich die Lese- und Schreibkunst aneigneten und selber aufzeichneten, was ihnen erinnerungswert schien, und wohl auch eigene Erzeugnisse.²⁷⁴

The manuscript versions of the tales are often poorly narrated, which to Murphy signifies that they were “noted down by monastic scribes as a contribution to learning rather than to literature”.²⁷⁵ By quoting Delargy²⁷⁶ and Chadwick,²⁷⁷ he proposes a “hypothesis of recording from oral recitation”,²⁷⁸ and thus offers an explanation as to why the narration of the manuscript version is often poor, why the beginning of a story is often well narrated but tails off later on in the story. He argues that aside from the weariness of the reciter, having to suffer frequent interruptions by the scribe, and being repeatedly asked to repeat things, a tale, as told originally, would have taken much longer to narrate, perhaps even lasting for several sessions.²⁷⁹ Furthermore, he says,

²⁷⁴ Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 72.

The manuscript collections of the monasteries usually do not indicate the source of their contents, or if they do name their sources, these are usually once again monastery manuscripts. But the first transcripts were probably not developed so that an inhabitant of a monastery interrogated a *fili* about his stories; we shall rather assume that many a *fili* himself learned the art of reading and writing and chronicled what seemed to him worthy of remembering, as well as probably his own creations. (Translation mine.)

²⁷⁵ Murphy, *Saga and Myth*, 13-14

²⁷⁶ “The Gaelic story-teller. With some notes on Gaelic folk-tales”, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, XXXI, London, 1945, 177-221; the quote given by Murphy can be found on page 32. (Murphy, *Saga and Myth*, 12.)

²⁷⁷ H. M. and N. K. Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature, III* (1940), p. 180.

²⁷⁸ Murphy, *Saga and Myth*, 12.

²⁷⁹ Murphy, *Saga and Myth*, 12-15.

[n]ot the opening, but some episode in the middle or end would probably have most awakened our admiration. For it is the law of oral narration that the story improves as the appreciation of the audience begins to affect the narrator.²⁸⁰

The stories, in the written-down versions, did not remain intact; in the monasteries where manuscripts were kept, monks often added to the stories, or corrected them to make them fit their belief, or to promote certain ideas, education, or moral code. Of course, the copying of manuscripts was also present, including all the intrusions and corrections of scribes known throughout the history.

Meanwhile, the oral tradition seemed to continue independently of the written tradition, with some of the stories being written down by other *filid*, perhaps other monks, in different monasteries and different periods of time, which accounts for numerous versions we find in different manuscripts.²⁸¹

The material found in medieval Irish literary tradition is diverse; unfortunately, a great amount of it was lost through loss of manuscripts, and perhaps some of it never achieved written status in the first place. Among the material preserved, there are eulogies, panegyrics, lyrical poems, religious matter, annals, genealogies and other historical material, some pseudo-historical material, literature of entertainment, fantasy, and much more. Most of it was composed earlier than the period in which it was written. The heroic literature belonging to this period mostly belongs to the genre of entertainment literature, and Jackson compares it to the *Iliad*, *Beowulf*, and the early German heroic poetry.

²⁸⁰ Murphy, *Saga and Myth*, 15.

²⁸¹ See Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 72-3, and Murphy, *Saga and Myth*, 11-12.

This is a group of prose tales purporting to describe a ‘heroic’ stage in Ireland’s distant past, telling of the wars and adventures of a group of characters thought of as having been real people, living long ago in a setting which it is implied was a genuine one. [...] the stories are told on the whole with straightforward realism as if they had really happened, though without any specific implication that this is history. This realism is nevertheless broken by at least two non-realistic elements. First, some few of the characters are clearly supernatural and some of the scenes involve supernatural events and motifs. [...] Second, the realism is often apt to be submerged in a burst of exaggeration, in deliberate fantasy, such as must have delighted the imagination of the early Irish audience but which is too often tedious and absurd to us, delaying and spoiling the straightforward vividness of the action. If we discount this side of the narrative, however, these stories are strikingly like the epics of other early literatures.²⁸²

To the *fili*, storytelling was not simply entertaining as such, but also the recording of history and tradition by means of celebrating the heroic past. His emphasis was on the stories; some historical facts or people are sometimes confirmed in annals or genealogies, although the tale itself was often pure mythology or legend. The same can be said about his poetry:

It has long been recognised that small nuggets of factual information can be mined from bardic poems. They often supplement the patrilinear genealogies with the names of a patron’s wife and his maternal relatives. It was a traditional function of the king’s *ollamh* [the highest order of *fili*] to keep a reckoning of his master’s military exploits and victories, and the bare names of the battlefields can be accompanied by circumstantial details. Another set piece was eulogizing a patron’s house, particularly when newly-built, sometimes with prayers for its future security, and a description of its interior. Elegies on a dead king occasionally describe the manner of his death.²⁸³

According to Jackson,²⁸⁴ the account of heroic society in Ireland as presented in the narrative is rather reliable in terms of clothing and weapons, certain rituals, and code of conduct. J. P. Mallory, however, concludes that this was not the case.²⁸⁵

²⁸² Jackson *The Oldest Tradition*, 2-3.

²⁸³ Katharine Simms, “Bardic Poetry as a Historical Source”, in Huw Pryce (ed.), *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies*, Cambridge, 1998, 238-58; quote is from page 70.

²⁸⁴ See Jackson, *The Oldest Tradition*, 28 ff.

It must be remembered though that storytelling and reciting of verse were professional activities, and that the *filid* were paid for their art by their patrons; according to Simms,

[...] that Irish nobles were paying not solely for the message the bardic verse contained, still less for its aesthetic value, but in large measure they were buying prestige.²⁸⁶

Exaggeration was not only a commonly used device, but also expected. Praise was lavished on patrons and heroes, thus making the characters or events larger than life. A similar situation is known from the Welsh heroic tradition of Taliesin and Aneirin.

In pre-Christian Ireland, there were three classes of learned men²⁸⁷: the priest (*druí*), the prophet (*fáith*), and the poet, the literary man, according to Jackson called **bardos* in Celtic, but who evolved in early Ireland into a member of a

specially highly trained class of poets and sages called *filid*, which means etymologically ‘seers’. These appear to have usurped some of the functions of the druids and prophets, but possibly not until the Christian period when those pagan officials naturally vanished away.²⁸⁸

The *fili* was, according to Zimmermann “at the top of the scale of oral skills”²⁸⁹ among the three classes of learned men mentioned above; it is difficult to say, however, how much their functions may have overlapped, or indeed been combined or interchangeable.

The medieval Irish court poet was, in the opinion of Carney, “the shadow of a high-

²⁸⁵ J. P. Mallory, “The world of Cú Chulainn: the archaeology of *Táin Bó Cúailnge*”, in *Aspects of the Táin*, Belfast, 1992, 103-53.

²⁸⁶ Simms, “Bardic poetry”, 67.

²⁸⁷ See Jackson, *The Oldest Tradition*, 23-4; Caerwyn Williams, “The court poet in medieval Ireland”, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. LVII (1971), 85-136, especially 98-107; Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, 62-4.

²⁸⁸ Jackson, *The Oldest Tradition*, 24.

²⁸⁹ Georges Denis Zimmermann, *The Irish Storyteller*, Dublin, 2001, 33.

ranking pagan priest or druid”,²⁹⁰ and his profession, after Knott, was “built upon the ruins of [...] the ancient druidic order, and was always a craft with its own dues, privileges, and prerogatives, decided by itself”.²⁹¹ There seems to have been much difference between the old *baird* and the later, more prestigious title of the *filid*. The main function of the *baird* was making praise poems to his patrons; some texts refer to *scélaige* or storyteller, and to *senchaid*, but it cannot always be said with certainty whether or not they were separate professions.²⁹² The *fili*, however, had a very complex role. To quote Bergin’s description of the court poet in medieval Ireland:

He was, in fact, a professor of literature and a man of letters, highly trained in the use of a polished literary medium, belonging to a hereditary caste in an aristocratic society, holding an official position by virtue of his training, his learning, his knowledge of the history and traditions of his country and his clan. He discharged... the functions of the modern journalist. He was not a song writer. He was often a public official, a chronicler, a political essayist, a keen and satirical observer of his fellow countrymen.²⁹³

He often took on the duties of a historian, a storyteller, or combined those duties in his work. His medium, traditionally, was not so much epic verse but prose narrative. This narrative, however, tended to contain verse, or rhythmic prose which added to the dramatic expression or underlined emotional passages. Several of the Irish tales selected for the purpose of the present research contain such passages. The *filid* did not learn or compose their work for a single hearing; it seems to have been expected of them to repeat it on numerous occasions and perhaps adapt it to the situation, time, and audience. They were men of learning and knowledge, experts in religion and law, history and lore, and could foretell the future.

²⁹⁰ Carney, *The Irish Bardic Poet*, 8.

²⁹¹ Knott, *Tadhg Dall Ó Huiginn*, xli.

²⁹² See Zimmermann, *The Irish Storyteller*, 33-35.

²⁹³ Bergin, *Bardic Poetry*, 154.

The position of a *fili* was hereditary, had a high social status, and required rigorous training. Proper family background (the so called three generations requirement) seems to have played an important part. If a person lacked the required family background, double qualifications were required to counterbalance for it. After three generations without a poet the right of family members to honour price ceased.²⁹⁴ Depending on the amount of training, the class of the *fili* was divided into seven main grades (or orders, as they are sometimes referred to), and three subordinate grades. The seven grade system appears to have been modelled on that of the Church.²⁹⁵ From the Old Irish period, only four texts survive which deal with the grades of poets. These texts are *Bretha Nemed*, *Míadslecta*, *Uraicecht Becc* (of which there is also a later version, referred to as *Uraicecht Becc II* by Liam Breatnach²⁹⁶), and *Uraicecht na Ríar*. The last one is the only one which is devoted to the grades of the poets only. In this respect it is unique; it is also the most detailed one. Apart from these four, all other texts which deal with the grades of the poets are more recent. For the purpose of the present thesis, *Uraicecht na Ríar* is followed in discussion of the grades of the poets, and also in terms of spelling of the names of the grades.

The seven grades of *fili* are: *ollam*, *ánruth*, *clí*, *cano*, *dos*, *macfuirmid*, and *fochloc*. The three subordinate grades are *taman*, *drisiuc*, and *oblaire*.²⁹⁷ *Uraicecht na Ríar* gives information regarding the honour-price, competence, and grade of each of

²⁹⁴ Liam Breatnach, *Uraicecht na Ríar*, Dublin, 1987, 95-8.

²⁹⁵ Liam Breatnach, *Uraicecht na Ríar*, 98.

²⁹⁶ Liam Breatnach *Uraicecht na Ríar*, 3-4

²⁹⁷ See Liam Breatnach *Uraicecht na Ríar*, 102-3.

these, although not always in the same detail.²⁹⁸ The following table summarizes the information regarding the competence, skills and honour price, edited by Liam Breatnach:²⁹⁹

Grade	Competence (number of compositions)	Honour price
<i>Ollam</i>	350 (50 for each grade); historical science, jurisprudence of Irish law	40 <i>séta</i>
<i>Ánruth</i>	175; very good poetry	20 <i>séta</i>
<i>Clí</i>	87	10 <i>séta</i>
<i>Cano</i>	63	7 <i>séta</i>
<i>Dos</i>	50	5 <i>séta</i>
<i>Macfuirmid</i>	40	4 <i>séta</i>
<i>Fochlog</i>	30	1½ <i>séta</i>
<i>Taman</i>	20; no knowledge of letters	½ scruple
<i>Drisiuc</i>	10	1 scruple
<i>Oblaire</i>	5	½ scruple

The honour price is representative of the skills that were required from different grades, and of their value. In legal context, *sét* is defined as

- (a) an object of value, a chattel (used especially of livestock, the chief medium of exchange in ancient Ireland);
- (b) a unit of value (1/2 a milch cow);

²⁹⁸ See Liam Breatnach *Uraicecht na Ríar* 105-115

²⁹⁹ Liam Breatnach *Uraicecht na Ríar*, 102ff.

or in more general sense,
(c) a valuable article of property, a treasure.³⁰⁰

Screpul(l) 'scruple' is defined as

- (a) in Laws a unit of value, 1/24 of an ounce or milch cow, and equal to three piginns;
- (b) the *s. óir* probably represented a different value (not found in Laws);
- (c) in general sense of fee, contribution, tribute, cess (freq. of a sum paid to a cleric for the exercise of his office, etc.);
- (d) as a unit of weight;
- (e) piece, morsel.³⁰¹

Each grade also had rules regarding the compensation against any kind of insult or violation of his right. The value of compensation was in proportion with the grade, with the *ollam* being entitled to the highest compensation and *oblaire* to the lowest. It is assumed that the *ollam* was a unique position that denoted not only a grade of learning but also an office; it could only be filled by one person, perhaps earlier appointed by the king. It is possible though that it later denoted the grade only.³⁰² According to J. E.

Caerwyn Williams,

the fully trained *fili* or *ollav* in olden times had the outer emblems of his dignified office. He could wear a peculiar dress, partly or wholly made of feathers. He had a right to an escort of thirty³⁰³ men. Attached to a court, he could claim a special chair (*cathair ollaman*). He usually followed his father into the profession, sometimes after competition.³⁰⁴

All of these grades of poets were free to have more than one patron, and travel from one to the other if they so chose. They were subject to

rigorous training, part of which was aimed at perfecting them [...] at memorising and reciting and handing on a large number of traditional tales. It was their

³⁰⁰ *DIL*, 200-201.

³⁰¹ *DIL*, 107-108.

³⁰² See Liam Breatnach, *Uraicecht na Ríar*, 94.

³⁰³ The size of the retinue here differs from the one given in *Uraicecht na Ríar*.

³⁰⁴ J. E. Caerwyn Williams, "The court poet", 121

business, and they were highly skilled at it. In such circumstances, stories may be passed on for centuries without any really fundamental change.³⁰⁵

The length of the education of the *fili* is not certain, and is thought to have changed through history. Jackson claims that the education of a *fili* lasted from seven to twelve years, and that the *filid* and *baird* may have trained together, the difference being that the education of the *baird* lasted seven years, while the *fili* were required to continue their education after that period and were required to accumulate a larger and more detailed amount of knowledge and skill.³⁰⁶

They learned composition in the various metres, antiquarian and other tradition (no doubt including genealogy), a very large number of the classic tales, and in their last year spells and magic. Their songs were recited to the music of the harp. The ‘bardic schools’ remained alive in Ireland until the vanishing of the traditional Gaelic way of life and the Gaelic aristocracy which supported them, in the seventeenth century, but there is an account of them extant, referring to this period, which shows still the long training and something of its character.³⁰⁷

J. E. Caerwyn Williams³⁰⁸ also wrote about the *bard* and the *fili* sharing the first seven years of training, with the *fili* continuing that training and with twelve years as the period of instruction required for becoming a professional *ollam*.

Theoretically, there were special metres for the *fili* and he could claim greater rewards for poems in some metres than for poems in others.³⁰⁹

According to him, the early *filid* schools are more than likely to have been supported by kings, yet he points out that this is uncertain, as early Irish historians combined fact and fiction in their accounts.³¹⁰ To an extent, the class of the *filid* was connected with the Church; they combined, after all, both divine and secular knowledge. According to

³⁰⁵ Jackson, *The Oldest Tradition*, 53.

³⁰⁶ Jackson, *The Oldest Tradition*, 24-5.

³⁰⁷ Jackson, *The Oldest Tradition*, 25.

³⁰⁸ J. E. Caerwyn Williams, “The court poet”, 120-1.

³⁰⁹ J. E. Caerwyn Williams, “The court poet”, 121.

³¹⁰ See J. E. Caerwyn Williams, “The court poet”, 120.

Simms, however, they were, especially in the later twelfth century, not as heavily dependent on the Church in terms of education as the compilers of annals and prose genealogies.³¹¹ The opinion on when the studies of the *fili* were disrupted is divided. Murphy claims the disruption was caused by the Anglo Norman invasion³¹² (1175), while Simms suggests that a twelfth century reform of the church, known as the Cistercian invasion, would have been a more likely cause; she supports her argument by referring to Alan Harrison's *Irish Trickster* and Barry O'Dwyer's 'Annals of Connacht'.³¹³

³¹¹ See Katharine Simms, "Literacy and the Irish bards", in Huw Pryce (ed.), *Literacy in Medieval Celtic Societies*, 238-43.

³¹² See Gerard Murphy *Saga and Myth*, 18-20, 72.

³¹³ See Katharine Simms, "Literacy", 242.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

III.1 Narrative, plot and story

Narrative, in fiction, is understood as an account or narration of an event, a history, tale, or story; or, the act or practise of narrating. It is primarily concerned with events, usually (but not necessarily) in connection with characters. It is a presentation of events which are in some way related to one another, regardless of whether or not they are imaginary. Cobley writes,

[w]herever there are humans, there appear to be stories. It is true that people tell stories about life history [...] people read stories when they consume various media [...] different media, such as musical notation, might embody stories [...] and, even when thinking about the world in an objective fashion, scientifically or ethically, the tendency to “storify” remains [...]³¹⁴

Narrative seems to be present in constructing, reflecting and representing the meaning of the world, and is the narrator’s way of exercising control over it. It is closely connected with the concepts of story and plot. It is narrative that weaves story and plot into a sequence of events and causality that links those events. This is obtained by a narrator, by means of different narrative techniques that can be adapted or combined according to the needs of the story, its medium, the situation in which it occurs, or the audience. The reaction of the audience, and their interaction with the narrative is influenced by these techniques, and also depends on them.

³¹⁴ Paul Cobley, *Narrative*, London, 2001, 2.

In *De inventione*, Cicero proposed the following definition of narrative:

‘an exposition of events that have occurred or are supposed to have occurred’.³¹⁵

In the Middle Ages, the main authorities on narrative theory were classical writers such as Plato,³¹⁶ Aristotle³¹⁷ and Cicero. Plato and Aristotle concerned themselves with the concepts of *mimesis* and *diegesis*, while Cicero concentrated on rhetorical thinking. Tony Davenport³¹⁸ proposes that even though their actual texts may not have been readily available, their theories were quoted and transmitted by translators. The theory of narrative has undergone considerable development. Monika Fludernik provides the following definition of narrative by quoting Edward Branigan:

[a] *simple narrative* is a series of episodes collected as a focused chain. Not only are the parts themselves in each episode linked by cause and effect, but the continuing center is allowed to develop, progress and interact from episode to episode. A narrative ends when its cause and effect chains are judged to be totally delineated. There is a reversibility in that the ending situation can be traced back to the beginning; or, to state it another way, the ending is seemingly entailed by the beginning.’³¹⁹ [...] [O]ne defines narrative as a text type that is based on ‘telling a story’, where story equals a set of events in chronological sequence [...] ³²⁰

Plot is, of course, concerned with the organization of the events into a pattern, and the organization of incidents and characters in such a way that the reader will maintain his/her interest in the narrative.

Plot, as an essential part of any narrative, ensures that a story is coherent, displays continuity and keeps the attention of the recipient. It is of vital importance for following

³¹⁵ Cicero, *De inventione*. Quoted in Tony Davenport, *Medieval Narrative*, Oxford, 2004, 9.

³¹⁶ *Politeia* – see Plato, *The Republic*, Harmondsworth, 1974.

³¹⁷ *Poetics* – see Aristotle, *Poetics*, Mineola, New York, 1997.

³¹⁸ Tony Davenport, *Medieval Narrative*, 9-23.

³¹⁹ Edward Branigan, *Narrative Comprehension and Film*. London, 1992, 20. Quoted in Monika Fludernik, *Towards a Natural Narratology*, London and New York, 1996, 20.

³²⁰ Monika Fludernik, *Towards a Natural Narratology*, London and New York, 1996. I am indebted to Luciana Meinking Guimarães, who recommended this book to me.

events, identifying their place in the chronology of the narrative, and deciphering the nature of the relationship between them. It is the plot, or lack thereof, that propels the recipient of a narrative (be it reader or listener) to stay focused and follow the development of the story and to make sense of the events in it, or discard it and find another activity to occupy his time and mind.

The causal relationship between events is the very element that gives rise to anticipation, interest, enthusiasm, suspense, boredom, lack of interest, surprise, shock, fascination, and any number of different reactions in the recipient that ultimately either makes him want to continue or abandon a story. If the causal relationship fails ultimately and without acceptable explanation, the story does not work. The way events are arranged provides a framework which helps us memorise or summarise a story; it would, undoubtedly, have helped the storytellers of old bring a story successfully from the beginning to the end. It has to be noted that today, the terms *plot* and *story* are not technical synonyms in that *story* denotes the sum total of events, in order as they take place, while *plot* is a selection of events of major importance without the build-up or catalyst events and circumstances.³²¹

In *plot*, events need not appear in order. This corresponds to the terms *fabula* and *sjuzet*, introduced by the Russian Formalist school of thought (Tomashevsky) at the beginning of the twentieth century and based on Aristotelian principles, which correspond to the concepts of *story* and *plot*³²² respectively, the former meaning the

³²¹ See Baldick, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 195-6.

³²² See Davenport, *Medieval Narrative*, 19.

sequence of events chronologically, the latter the order and manner of presentation of events. Other narratologists, such as Mieke Bal,³²³ perform narrative analysis on three levels, namely those of text, story, and fabula.³²⁴ It is obvious that in some twentieth-century literary movements, the definition of the plot has become extremely loose and relaxed, and some master storytellers of the twentieth/twenty-first century have come to completely disregard the unity and the causal relationships between events.³²⁵

III.2 The concepts of plot and story as Aristotelian principles

Already in the 4th century BC, a great importance was attributed to the concept of plot, as is evident from Aristotle's *Poetics*, which is mainly concerned with poetry as the imitation of nature (*mimesis*).³²⁶ *Poetics* mentions different kinds of imitation such as that through the medium of voice, form, colour, or rhythmical movement; imitation through language alone, in prose or verse;³²⁷ and *diegesis*,³²⁸ or imitation by narration:

³²³ Mieke Bal, *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, Toronto, Buffalo, London, 1985. For an example of this theory applied to Middle Welsh literature, see Edgar M. Slotkin, "The fabula, story, and text of *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy*", *CMCS* 18 (Winter 1989), 89-111.

³²⁴ See Susana Onega et al., *Narratology: an Introduction*, London and New York, 1996, 6-8.

³²⁵ A striking example here is the American author Robert Coover (1932-), who plays with the unity of events to the point of offering alternative episodes which are mutually exclusive, toys with the sequence of episodes, and disregards the cause-effect relationships. His short story *The Babysitter* is a good example of such practice. An example of similar disregard for the unity from the Middle Ages, although almost certainly not produced in such a way intentionally, and by no means as extreme as Coover's work, is *Táin Bó Cúailnge*. I am grateful to Dr. Simon Rodway for drawing my attention to this and for discussing this point with me.

³²⁶ Cuddon, *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 511-2 suggests that "[mimesis] has almost the same meaning as mime [from Greek "imitation", "a form of drama in which actors tell a story by gestures, originating in Sicily and southern Italy", *ibid.*, 511], but the concept of imitation in this case has wider connotations. Aristotle, in *Poetics*, states that tragedy is an imitation of an action, but he uses the term comprehensively to refer to the construction of a play and what is put into it. We should rather use *mimesis* to mean representation, which relates to verisimilitude. [...]"

³²⁷ "[...] – but this has hitherto been without a name. For there is no common term which we could apply to the mimes of Sophron and Xenarchus and the Socratic dialogues on the one hand; and, on the other, to poetic imitations in iambic, elegiac, or any similar metre." Aristotle, *Poetics*, 2.

³²⁸ "A narrative (as opposed to *mimetic*) account. In drama and in film *diegesis* can take the form of voice-over, choric intervention, and on-stage description of mimetic action. Similarly, music or sound-effects not

[t]he poet may imitate by narration – in which case he can either take another personality as Homer does, or speak in his own person, unchanged – or he may present all his characters as living and moving before us.³²⁹

Mimesis, therefore, shows, while *diegesis* tells. Most prose works, unless entirely in the form of descriptions or dialogue, tend to be a mixture of *mimesis* and *diegesis*.

Aristotle wrote extensively on the subject of plot (*mythos*) in terms of the difference between tragedy and epic, and seemed to use the same term to denote both *story* and *plot*.³³⁰ At the very beginning of *Poetics*, attention is drawn to the importance of the plan of the story, i.e. the structure of the plot, as “requisite to a good poem”,³³¹ a point which recurs and is elaborated throughout the work. According to Aristotle, the plot originated from Sicilly,³³² and it was, along with the number of characters, expanded by Aeschylus.³³³

The plot was considered one of the six parts of tragedy:

[e]very Tragedy, therefore, must have six parts, which parts determine its quality namely, Plot, Character, Diction, Thought, Spectacle, Song. Two of the parts constitute the medium of imitation, one the manner, and three the objects of

emanating from mimetic action but superimposed on it: sonnets and songs performed by characters in Shakespeare are mimetic; atmospheric background music is diegetic.” Cuddon, *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 225.

³²⁹ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 4.

³³⁰ The term *myth(os)* is of considerable lexical interest regarding its meaning and development: “[i]t is a term of complex history and meaning. Homer used the word *muthos* (μῦθος) to mean narrative and conversation, but not a fiction. Odysseus tells false stories about himself and uses the term *muthologenevein* to signify ‘telling a story’. Later, Greek *muthos* is used to mean fiction. Plato refers to *muthoi* to denote something not wholly lacking truth but for the most part fictitious. It has been surmised that the transition of *muthos* may have been helped by a kind of association with *muein*, ‘to initiate into secrets’ (hence, mystic, mystery). The word *muthikos* (‘mythical’) went into Latin as *mythicus*. *Muthos* has also been equated with the Latin *fabula*. Nowadays a myth tends to signify a fiction, but a fiction which conveys a psychological truth. In general, a myth is a story which is not ‘true’ and which involves (as a rule) supernatural beings – or at any rate supra-human beings. Myth is always concerned with creation. Myth explains how something came to exist. [...]” See Cuddon, *Dictionary of Literary terms*, 525-6.

³³¹ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 11.

³³² Aristotle, *Poetics*, 9.

³³³ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 8.

imitation. And these complete the list. These elements have been employed, we may say, by the poets to a man; in fact, every play contains Spectacular elements as well as Character, Plot, Diction, Song, and Thought. But most important of all is the structure of the incidents. [...] [C]haracter comes in a subsidiary to the actions. Hence the incidents and the plot are the end of a tragedy; and the end is the chief thing of all. Again, without action there cannot be a tragedy; there may be without character.³³⁴

Aristotle regards plot, and its structure, as the single most important element of any tragedy, with all other parts being supportive elements, which are not *per se* essential to the existence of a tragedy. He leaves his readers in no doubt as to the superiority and role of the plot and emphasizes this view on several occasions.³³⁵

The Aristotelian view of the plot is that of a well-knit imitation of the action:

[a]gain, Tragedy is the imitation of an action; and an action implies personal agents, who necessarily possess certain distinctive qualities both of character and thought; for it is by these that we qualify actions themselves, and these – thought and character – are the two natural causes from which actions spring, and on action again all success or failure depends. Hence, the Plot is the imitation of the action: - for by plot I here mean the arrangement of the incidents. By Character I mean that in virtue of which we ascribe certain qualities to the agents. Thought is required wherever a statement is proved, or, it may be, a general truth enunciated.³³⁶

A further characteristic of a well-knit plot is its completeness, namely the presence of a beginning, a middle, and an end,³³⁷ all of which are required to possess magnitude. Each of the three has a very defined position in relation to the other two. The structural position of the three aforementioned elements, coupled with magnitude, is essential for

³³⁴ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 11-12.

³³⁵ See Aristotle, *Poetics*, 10-15.

³³⁶ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 11.

³³⁷ “A whole is that which has a beginning, a middle, and an end. A beginning is not that which does not itself follow anything by causal necessity, but after which something naturally is or comes to be. An end, on the contrary, is that which itself naturally follows some other thing, either by necessity, or as a rule, but has nothing following it. A middle is that which follows something as some other thing follows it. A well constructed plot, therefore, must neither begin nor end at haphazard, but conform to these principles.” Aristotle, *Poetics*, 14.

beauty,³³⁸ which in turn is proportional to the length of the whole tragedy, “provided that the whole be perspicuous”.³³⁹ The poet is, in the Aristotelian school of thought, regarded as “the maker of plots rather than of verses”,³⁴⁰ and imitation is at the very core of poetry; namely, poetry is caused by imitation as innate instinct, or by the pleasure imitating gives.³⁴¹ The poet relates not so much facts, i.e. “what has happened”, but possibility, “what may happen, - what is possible according to the law of probability or necessity”.³⁴²

A superior poet is attentive to the structure he creates, and is aware of the importance of the principal element, the plot. The plot of a tragedy should not be simple but complex, and should incite pity and fear;³⁴³ the concept of pity and fear provoked through the inner jointing of the structure was considered superior, and while complex, a good plot was a single-level one compared to a double-level one, with a change of fortune from bliss to wretchedness:

[a] perfect tragedy should, as we have seen, be arranged not on a simple but on the complex plan. It should, moreover, imitate actions which excite pity and fear, this being the distinctive mark of tragic imitation. It follows plainly, in the first place, that the change of fortune presented must not be the spectacle of a virtuous man brought from prosperity to adversity: for this moves neither pity nor fear; it merely shocks us. Nor, again, that of a bad man passing from adversity to prosperity: for nothing can be more alien to the spirit of Tragedy; it possesses no single tragic quality; it neither satisfies the moral sense nor calls forth pity or fear. [...] for pity is aroused by unmerited misfortune, fear by the misfortune of a man like ourselves. [...] There remains, then, the character between these two extremes, - that of a man who is not eminently good and just, yet whose misfortune is brought about not by vice or depravity, but by some error or frailty. He must be one who is highly renowned and prosperous, - a personage like Oedipus, Thyestes, or other illustrious men of such families. A well-constructed

³³⁸ See Aristotle, *Poetics*, 14-15.

³³⁹ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 15.

³⁴⁰ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 18.

³⁴¹ See Aristotle, *Poetics*, 5-7.

³⁴² Aristotle, *Poetics*, 17.

³⁴³ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 19.

plot should, therefore, be single in issue rather than double as some maintain. The change of fortune should be not from bad to good, but, reversely, from good to bad. [...] Fear and pity may be aroused by spectacular means; but they may also result from the inner structure of the piece, which is the better way, and indicates a superior poet. [...] Actions capable of this effect must happen between persons who are either friends or enemies or indifferent to one another. [...] But when the tragic incident occurs between those who are near or dear to one another – if, for example, a brother kills, or intends to kill, a brother, a son his father, a mother her son, a son his mother, or any other deed of the kind is done – these are the situations to be looked for by the poet. He may not indeed destroy the framework of the received legends [...] but he ought to show invention of his own, and skilfully handle the traditional material. [...] [T]he deed of horror may be done, but done in ignorance, and the tie of kinship or friendship be discovered afterwards.³⁴⁴

Aristotle emphasizes the importance of a necessary or probable sequence³⁴⁵ of events for a good plot. He postulates that both plot and characterisation should strive for the portrayal of the necessary or the probable, and that the plot should unravel of itself, of its own, and not through the *Deus ex Machina*.³⁴⁶ The principle of the latter was in Greek tragedy disapproved of by Aeschylus and Sophocles. Exclusion of the irrational from the tragedy was essential, however if there was a need for it, it remained outside the tragedy.³⁴⁷

Aristotle also distinguishes between simple and complex plots, depending on *peripeteia* and *anagnorisis*, which are absent from simple plots but tend to be present, one or both, in complex plots. *Peripeteia* or reversal of the situation depends on probability or necessity, and is by definition “a change by which the action veers round to

³⁴⁴ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 22-6.

³⁴⁵ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 18.

³⁴⁶ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 28-9. “(Lat., ‘god out of the machine’) In Greek drama a god was lowered onto the stage by a *mechane* so that he could get the hero out of difficulties or untangle the plot. Euripides uses it a good deal. Sophocles and Aeschylus avoided it. Bertolt Brecht parodied the abuse of the device at the end of his *Threepenny Opera*. Today this phrase is applied to any unanticipated intervener who resolves a difficult situation, in any literary genre.” Cuddon, *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 216-7.

³⁴⁷ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 29.

its opposite”.³⁴⁸ *Anagnorisis*, or recognition, is “a change from ignorance from knowledge, producing love or hate between the persons destined by the poet for good or bad fortune”.³⁴⁹ *Peripeteia* and *anagnorisis* together typically produce pity and fear, which are essential in a tragedy. There are five types of *anagnorisis*, some of which are considered superior to others: recognition by sight (congenital or acquired after birth, such as scars, bodily marks, or tokens), which is the lowest form of all; recognition which is invented by the poet for the purpose of the story, usually considered only slightly better than recognition by sight; recognition which depends on the jogging of a memory; recognition by reasoning; and recognition arising from incidents, which is considered the most superior.³⁵⁰

In terms of the plot coming together and functioning in the narrative, Aristotle demands that in terms of construction, the poet should have the scene before his eyes, as an important condition for success.³⁵¹ The unity of the plot is important.³⁵² Every action represented a whole structured unit that was part of the whole, and it could not be moved in the narrative, or even altogether removed, without disturbing the whole. This is particularly relevant to the Irish texts, as I attempt to show later on in this chapter.

The importance of the construction and structuring of plot is by no means to be underestimated, and its effect is manifold and far-reaching. I shall later on in this chapter

³⁴⁸ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 19-20.

³⁴⁹ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 20.

³⁵⁰ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 29-31.

³⁵¹ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 32.

³⁵² Aristotle, *Poetics*, 47.

attempt to demonstrate to what degree the final redactor of the texts was aware of that, and how the texts examined prove this hypothesis.

III.3 Gustav Freytag and the Pyramid Structure

Gustav Freytag, in his 1863 *Die Technik des Dramas*, discussed the dramatic action (in terms of idea, unity, characterization) and the construction of drama. He stated that drama, in terms of construction, resembles a pyramid. Freytag's theory is principally based on five-act classical drama, however its principles can effectively be applied to a number of prose works. It is a step on from the Aristotelian three-part division of beginning, middle and end. The triangular construction, nowadays known as 'Freytag's pyramid', consists of five parts: introduction, rise, climax, fall, and catastrophe or dénouement:

[...] erhält das Drama - wenn man die Anordnung durch Linien verbildlicht- einen pyramidalen Bau. Es steigt von der Einleitung mit dem Zutritt des erregenden Moments bis zu dem Höhepunkt, und fällt von da bis zur Katastrophe. Zwischen diesen drei Teilen liegen die Teile der Steigerung und des Falles.³⁵³

Each of these parts may either be a single scene or a succession of scenes, while the climax tends to be a single, main scene. Each part also has a specific function. Between these five parts, there are three dramatic moments that at the same time separate and connect them, namely the inciting moment (*das erregende Moment*), the tragic moment (*das tragische Moment*) and the moment of the final suspense (*das Moment der letzten*

³⁵³ Gustav Freytag, *Die Technik des Dramas* (Leipzig, 1863), 100.

... the drama possesses – if one may symbolize its arrangement by lines – a pyramidal structure. It rises from the introduction with the entrance of the exciting forces to the climax, and falls from here to the catastrophe. Between these three parts lie the parts of the rise and the fall. (Gustav Freytag: *Freytag's Technique of Drama: and Exposition of Dramatic Composition and Art*. An authorized translation from the 6th German edition by Elias J. MacEwan, M. A. Chicago, 1900, 114. Electronic copy available at <http://www.archive.org/stream/freytagstechniqu00freyuoft/freytagstechniqu00freyuoft-djvu.txt>.)

Spannung). The inciting moment is necessary for each drama, whereas the other two need not necessarily be present, although their presence makes for a better drama.

The exposition, which was in classical drama represented by a prologue, is of great importance:

[d]a die Darstellung von Ort, Zeit, Volkstum und Lebensverhältnissen des Helden der Einleitung des Dramas zukommt, so wird diese zunächst das Umgebende kurz charakterisieren. Außerdem wird dem Dichter hier Gelegenheit, sowohl die eigentümliche Stimmung des Stückes wie in kurzer Ouvertüre anzudeuten, als auch das Tempo desselben, die größere Leidenschaftlichkeit oder Ruhe, mit welcher die Handlung forteilt.³⁵⁴

Its role is to present the circumstances of the hero and provide the background information necessary for general understanding of the action.

The inciting moment, usually located at the beginning of the drama, is important because it kicks the drama into action and gives it its direction. It functions as a motive and is significant for the development of the action that leads toward the climax. It should not be too obvious or too conspicuous, and should be introduced as early as possible for best effect:

[i]mmer aber wird [der Dichter] dasselbe so früh als möglich bringen, denn erst von ihm ab beginnt ernste dramatische Arbeit.³⁵⁵

³⁵⁴ Gustav Freytag, *Technik*, 102.

... to explain the place and time of the action, the nationality and life relations of the hero, it must at once briefly characterize the environment. Besides, the past will have the opportunity here, as in a short overture, to indicate the peculiar mood of the piece, as well as the time, the greater vehemence or quiet with which the action moves forward. (Gustav Freytag: *Freytag's Technique of Drama: and Exposition of Dramatic Composition and Art*. An authorized translation from the 6th German edition by Elias J. MacEwan, M. A. Chicago, 1900, 118. Electronic copy available at <http://www.archive.org/stream/freytagstechniqu00freyuoft/freytagstechniqu00freyuoft-djvu.txt>.)

³⁵⁵ Gustav Freytag, *Technik*, 108.

But [the poet] must always bring it into operation as soon as possible; for only from its introduction forward does earnest dramatic work begin. (Gustav Freytag: *Freytag's Technique of Drama: and Exposition of Dramatic Composition and Art*. An authorized translation from the 6th German edition by

The inciting moment, in short, is the moment on which depends the development of the climax, and without which the action would not progress.

The building up of tension denotes that the action has truly begun and is developing in a certain direction as shown earlier. The main characters have been established; the interest of the spectator has been aroused. Secondary characters are introduced and the conflict begins to develop.

The climax is the high point of the drama, the point where the tension is at its highest:

*[d]er Höhenpunkt des Dramas ist die Stelle des Stückes, in welcher das Ergebnis des aufsteigenden Kampfes stark und entschieden heraustritt, er ist fast immer die Spitze einer groß ausgeführten Szene, an welche sich die kleineren Verbindungsszenen von der Steigerung und der fallenden Handlung heranlegen.*³⁵⁶

The climax tends to be in the middle of a group of forces. These forces, on either side, move upwards and downwards, thus forming the aforementioned triangular/pyramidal structure. The tragic moment, when present, indicates the downfall of the hero, and parallels the Aristotelian concept of *anagnorisis*, the moment of tragic recognition.

Elias J. MacEwan, M. A. Chicago, 1900, 125. Electronic copy available at <http://www.archive.org/stream/freytagstechniqu00freyuoft/freytagstechniqu00freyuoft-djvu.txt>.)

³⁵⁶ Gustav Freytag, *Technik*, 111.

The climax of the drama is the place in the piece where the results of the rising movement come out strong and decisively; it is almost always the crowning point of a great, amplified scene, enclosed by the smaller connecting scenes of the rising, and of the falling action. (Gustav Freytag: *Freytag's Technique of Drama: and Exposition of Dramatic Composition and Art*. An authorized translation from the 6th German edition by Elias J. MacEwan, M. A. Chicago, 1900, 128. Electronic copy available at <http://www.archive.org/stream/freytagstechniqu00freyuoft/freytagstechniqu00freyuoft-djvu.txt>.)

The climax is inevitably followed by the fall, which is, according to Freytag, the most difficult part of any drama. Up to the point of the climax, the main characters direct the tension and interest in the right direction, but after the climax, there follows a pause and the tension must be directed onto something new. Freytag recommends that the number of participating characters be reduced or that perhaps new roles be introduced, but he warns against distracting the attention of the audience. The audience must by now understand the sequence of events and the way they are connected. Freytag also warns that any flaws in characterization will be obvious now, as well as any structural flaws of the drama.

The moment of final suspense, when present, ensures that the catastrophe does not generally come as a surprise to the audience. Like the tragic moment, it tends to be present in tragedies.

The catastrophe, or the closing action, is what used to be known as *exodus* in classical drama. It is the resolution of all preceding action and, in tragedy, the utter ruin of the hero. It presents the necessary consequences of the action and character involvement. Freytag advises against unnecessary verbosity and advocates absolute clarity:

Für den Bau der Katastrophe gelten folgende Regeln. Erstens man vermeide jetzt jedes unnütze Wort und lasse kein Wort, das die Idee des Stückes aus dem Wesen der Charaktere zwanglos erklären kann, ungesagt.
Ferner versage man sich breite szenische Ausführung, man halte das dramatisch Darzustellende kurz, einfach, schmucklos, gebe in Wort und Handlung das Beste und Gedrungenste, fasse die Szenen mit ihren unentbehrlichen Verbindungen in einen kleinen Körper mit rasch pulsierendem Leben zusammen, vermeide,

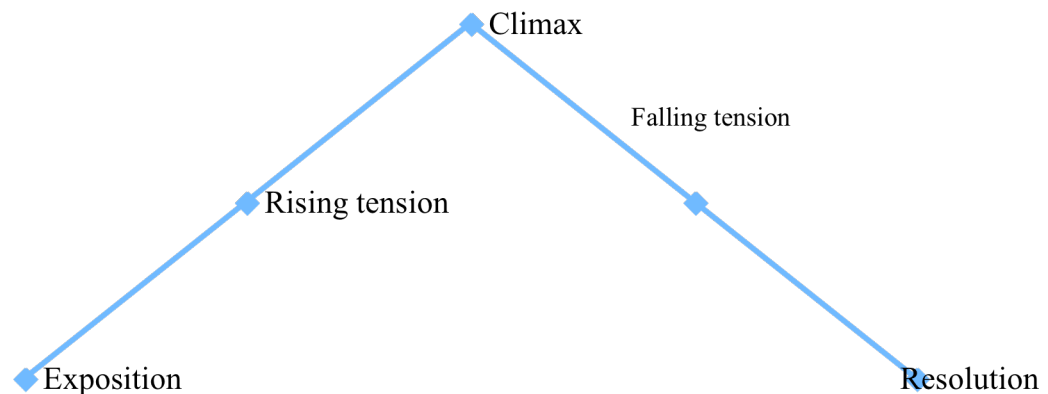
solange die Handlung läuft, neue oder schwierige Bühneneffekte, zumal Massenwirkungen.³⁵⁷

While these particular requirements are intended specifically for tragedy, they are no less important, if somewhat relaxed, in prose. The resolution of the action should be complete, yet concise. The resolution is commonly referred to as 'dénouement'.

Graphically, Freytag's pyramid is usually represented by means of a triangular structure, with the left-hand side corner marking the exposition, the top corner representing the climax, and the right-hand side corner representing the resolution or dénouement :

³⁵⁷ Freytag, *Technik*, 119-20.

For the construction of the catastrophe, the following rules are of value: first, avoid every unnecessary word, and leave no word unspoken whereby the idea of the piece can, without effort, be made clear from the nature of the characters. Further, the poet must deny himself broad elaboration of scenes, must keep what he presents dramatically brief, simple, free from ornament; must give in diction and action, the best and most impressive; must confine the scenes with their indispensable connections within a small body, with quick, pulsating life; must avoid, so long as the action is in progress, new or difficult stage effects, especially the effects of masses. (Gustav Freytag: *Freytag's Technique of Drama: and Exposition of Dramatic Composition and Art*. An authorized translation from the 6th German edition by Elias J. MacEwan, M. A. Chicago, 1900, 139-40. Electronic copy available at <http://www.archive.org/stream/freytagstechniqu00freyuoft/freytagstechniqu00freyuoft-djvu.txt>.)



Freytag's Pyramid

In short, Freytag's work, modified to refer to prose works, can be summarized as follows: the exposition provides the theme, the setting, the major characters and possibly a hint of the conflict. The inciting moment prepares the ground for a rise in action, which the reader perceives as an increase in tension. The conflict intensifies; sometimes, secondary conflicts appear, all of which results in the climax. This is the turning point for the protagonist. The tension is at its utmost. Following the climax is the reversal of the protagonist's fortune, which may be for better or for worse. The moment of tragic recognition (*anagnorisis*) may follow at some point during the fall in action, however it tends to be absent in prose works. The tension diminishes. This leads to the dénouement or resolution, which undoes the tension completely. A catastrophe is not a necessary ending in genres other than the tragedy. The dénouement may or may not involve a reversal of the protagonist's situation.

III.4 Noam Chomsky's concepts of surface structure and deep structure and their relation to plot and story

Noam Chomsky (1928-) introduced the terms surface structure and deep structure, which represent complementary concepts of his Generative³⁵⁸ Transformational grammar, surface structure denoting what can be seen or heard, and deep structure (also called 'mediating structure' by Lévi-Strauss) denoting the evidence or product of the structure.³⁵⁹

Originally terms from linguistics, from Generative Transformational Grammar,³⁶⁰ deep or underlying structure and surface structure can be conceptually applied to literary works to a degree. In linguistics, structure is referred to as deep or underlying structure from a context-free language if it satisfies basic dependency,³⁶¹ i.e. is generalized. Surface structure is derived from deep structure by application of an important general property.³⁶² In syntax, deep structure governs the arrangement and order of different parts

³⁵⁸ "Generative Grammar: a concept developed by Noam Chomsky in *Syntactic Structures* (1957). His fundamental theory is that it is possible by the application of a finite number of 'rewrite rules' to predict (that is to say, 'generate') an infinite number of sentences in a language and to specify their structure. Of various models available he discusses three: finite state grammars; phase structure grammars; transformational grammar." Cuddon, *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 341.

³⁵⁹ See Michael Lane, "Introduction: I. The structuralist method; II. Structure and structuralism", in: Michael Lane (ed.), *Structuralism: A Reader*, Cape, London, 1970, 14; Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary*, 213.

³⁶⁰ For a comprehensive definition and discussion of Transformational Grammar, see H. Bußmann, *Lexikon der Sprachwissenschaft*, Stuttgart, 1990, 801-5.

³⁶¹ Meaning that one item, i.e. word, in a sentence depends on another item (or items) in that sentence for its position and grammatically correct form. See V. A. Fromkin (ed.), *Linguistics: An Introduction to Linguistic Theory*, Malden, Oxford, 2000, 195-256, 692.

³⁶² For a more detailed linguistic explanation, see V. A. Fromkin (ed.), *Linguistics*, 233-45.

of speech.³⁶³ Surface structure is connected to the pragmatical, lexical level, and dependent on deep structure.³⁶⁴ Deep structure, as per transformational syntax, also allows changes (implemented by the speaker) of the grammatical structure without changing its essential, i.e. lexical, meaning.³⁶⁵

Applied in broad terms to literary works, deep structure and surface structure support Aristotle's postulates described in *Poetics*, *deep structure* translating into *plot* and *surface structure* translating into *story*. Relating to a group of texts, deep structure would mean that these texts share the same or similar basic plot, or a common theme, or the same set of closely related issues – tales of youth, heroic adventures, heroic biography, legendary tales. Surface structure would be the stories resulting from different plots.

III.5 Langue and parole

Aristotelian principles were strictly adhered to in Greek tragedies, and closely followed in Elizabethan drama; they were used by the Russian Formalist school of thought (1915-30) for the clarification of the difference between *plot* and *story*, which also fit in with de Saussure's concept of *langue* and *parole* as it occurs in linguistics.

³⁶³ As a result of deep structure, semantically empty, i.e. meaningless, sentences are grammatically correct despite being completely lacking on a semantic level, e.g. "The pointless words of loud blue grammar shop enthusiastically."

³⁶⁴ Compare the following two sentences: 'This child is quick to understand' and 'This child is likely to understand'. Deep structure governing the order in which parts of speech appear in both sentences is identical, yet there is a significant difference in surface structure, i.e. pragmatical level: "This child understands things quickly, is a fast learner" as opposed to "It is likely that this child will understand".

³⁶⁵ The most characteristic of such changes in syntax is the transformation of an active voice structure into a passive voice one; the basic meaning remains unchanged, however subtle differences can be perceived by a careful listener.

Broadly interpreted, structuralism in linguistics is concerned with

language in a most general sense: not just the language of utterance and speech in writing. It is concerned with signs and signification. Structuralist theory considers all conventions and codes of communication: for example, all forms of signal (smoke, fire, traffic lights, Morse, flags, gesture), body language, clothes, artefacts, status symbols, and so on.³⁶⁶

The French linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (*Cours de linguistique générale*, 1915) is generally regarded as the founder of structuralism; he introduced several ideas which constitute the basis of structuralism: firstly, the concept of language as a sign system/structure with components that can only be understood in relation to each other and to the system/structure as a whole; secondly, the concepts of *langue* and *parole*,³⁶⁷ where *langue* represents a language in its totality, as a whole, as shared by the collective consciousness of its speakers (which includes all the elements of that language as well as

³⁶⁶ Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary*, 868.

³⁶⁷ “Langue vs. Parole [frz. ‘Sprache/Sprachsystem vs. Sprachverwendung/Sprechen’]. In F. de Saussures *Cours de linguistique générale* (1916) eingeführte Unterscheidung zwischen ‘Sprache’ (frz. *langue*) als abstraktem System von Zeichen und Regeln und ‘Sprechen’ (frz. *parole*) als der konkreten Realisierung von L. im Gebrauch. L. wird als statisches, einzelsprachliches Zeichensystem von überindividueller (=sozialer) Gültigkeit gekennzeichnet, das auf der Invarianz und Funktionalität (=Relevanz) seiner Elemente beruht. Auf der Basis dieses L.-Systems sind P.-Ereignisse individuelle, nach Stimmlage, Alter, Dialekt u.a. verschiedene Konkretisierungen, die durch Variabilität und Redundanz gekennzeichnet sind. Ziel des (strukturalistisch-orientierten) Sprachwissenschaftlers ist die Erforschung der systematischen Regularitäten der L. mittels Daten der P. (Corpus), während die P. selbst Untersuchungsgegenstand verschiedenen Disziplinen (wie Phonetik, Psychologie, Physiologie) sein kann. Dieser Autonomieanspruch einer rein theoretischen Sprachbeachtung, wie er sich in N. Chomskys Gegenüberstellung von Kompetenz vs. Performanz fortsetzt, hat vielfache Kritik und Revision gefunden [...]” H. Bußmann, *Lexikon der Sprachwissenschaft*, 432-3.

The distinction (introduced in F. de Saussure’s *Cours de linguistique générale*, 1916) between ‘language’ (F. *langue*) as an abstract system of signs and rules and ‘speech’ (F. *parole*) as a practical realization of ‘language’ in use, ‘language’ is characterized as a static, single linguistic sign system of overly individual (=social) validity based on the invariance and functionality (=relevance) of its elements. On the basis of this ‘language’ system, ‘speech’ phenomena are individual, characterized by style, age, dialect and other different concrete forms that depend on variability and redundancy. The aim of this (structuralism oriented) linguistic researchers is the exploration of the systematic regularities of ‘language’ through ‘speech’ (corpus), while ‘speech’ itself can be the subject of investigation in various disciplines such as phonetics, psychology, physiology. This autonomous claim of a purely theoretical linguistic attention, as continued in N. Chomsky’s comparison of competence vs. performance continues, has received much criticism and revision [...] (Translation mine.)

the rules for their use and combination), while *parole* represents an utterance, or the use made of the resources of the language, as produced and combined by the system. Thirdly, the distinction between *diachronic* and *synchronic*³⁶⁸ approaches to the study of a language, whereby diachronic examines its origins, history, development and change, while synchronic concentrates on the linguistic system in a particular state at any given point in its time.

Closely connected to the last pair mentioned is the distinction between the *signifiant* and the *signifié*, or the sound image/graphic denotation of a concept in the language and the concept it denotes, the association of which is wholly arbitrary and a product of linguistic convention.³⁶⁹

Language should be studied as if it were frozen in time and cut transversely like a leaf. What results is a vision of the entire language system as it exists in implied or unconscious fashion in any spoken utterance. Utterances are merely the manifestation of the rules of the system that lend order to the heterogeneity of language.³⁷⁰

This quotation and approach are crucial for my analysis of the Four Branches and the Ulster Cycle tales. By considering each group of texts as two separate systems, and by looking at individual texts as they have been preserved for us, as if they were frozen in time and made inflexible by writing them down in the form which we are familiar with

³⁶⁸ “In der Dichotomie Synchronie vs. Diachronie wird der D. eine untergeordnete, die synchronische Betrachtungsweise allenfalls ergänzende, Funktion zugewiesen. Die insgesamt ahistorische, rein deskriptive Sprachbetrachtung strukturalistischer Forschungsrichtungen hat diese Gewichtung weitgehend übernommen.” H. Bußmann, *Lexikon der Sprachwissenschaft*, 176.

In the dichotomy of synchrony vs. diachrony, a subordinate function is assigned to diachrony, while the synchronic approach is assigned a complementary function. The overall ahistorical, purely descriptive view of structuralist research direction has largely adopted this evaluation. (Translation mine.)

³⁶⁹ See De Saussure, “On The Nature of Language” (extracts from *Course in General Linguistics*, translated by Wade Baskin, in Michael Lane (ed.), *Structuralism: A Reader*, Cape, London, 1970, 43-56. Also see Caws, *Structuralism: the Art of the Intelligible*, 59-82, for more details.

³⁷⁰ Rivkin and Ryan (ed.), *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, Oxford, 2004, 53

today, and by comparing the written documents that both cultures left behind, albeit in different centuries (and despite the fact that the stories as known today are presumed not to be from exactly the same time), I propose to explore the possible development of the texts known as the Four Branches and the selection of eight Irish texts from the group of texts known as the Ulster Cycle, in terms of transition from oral to written, editing, and creating coherent, plausible texts from the materials that were once, wholly or in parts, very probably oral tales.

As pointed out earlier, in relation to literature and literary theory, the concept most readily associated with structuralism, and relevant to this chapter, is a school of literary criticism known as Russian Formalism (main figures Roman Jakobson, Boris Eichenbaum, Viktor Shklovsky, Boris Tomasevsky, Juri Tynyanov, Todorov). Russian Formalism was at its strongest in the early 1920s and suppressed in the 1930s. Literary structuralism, according to Sturrock, is

[s]tructuralism in its most provocative and unpopular form. [...] certainly Structuralism undermines the naïve but endemic view that literature, like other art-forms, is essentially self-expression, because of its insistence that one 'self' may be mediated to another only by means of a common, objective system of signs. In the case of literature, the objective system which authors necessarily have recourse to is two-fold: there is the system of their native language itself and the system, overlaid on that, of characteristically 'literary' [sic] conventions to which they must also accede if they are to achieve recognizably literary works.³⁷¹

Structuralism does not eradicate the idea of uniqueness attached to both authors and texts; nevertheless it demands the understanding of the literary system in which they exist in order to decide what the uniqueness is.

Different texts and authors have much more in common than may be supposed and Structuralism tries to bring this out. It is in search of the *langue* of which each

³⁷¹ Sturrock, *Structuralism*, Oxford, 2003, 98.

individual literary work is the *parole*.³⁷²

This applies to the present argument by looking at the Welsh and Irish texts as a whole as *langue*, and at individual tales as *parole*. *Langue* is the totality of the oral tradition of the two Celtic sister cultures, while *parole*, namely the individual tales, are utterances, the use of the system, and the rules postulated. *Langue* would, in the Welsh literary tradition, match *cyfarwyddyd*³⁷³ - ‘story, history, narrative’ – as the canon of medieval Welsh literature.³⁷⁴ I am inclined to agree with Mac Cana that Ford’s³⁷⁵ interpretation of the term as ‘materials of poetry’ is too limited; as Mac Cana pointed out,

it must be kept in mind that the schooled poets of the Celtic countries encompassed virtually all learning within their repertoire and that the materials they composed and transmitted, while characteristically in verse, were not confined to it.³⁷⁶

Sioned Davies³⁷⁷ agrees with the broader meaning of the term, as does Roberts.³⁷⁸

Cyfawyddyd, according to *GPC*³⁷⁹, has two main meanings:

- (1) (a) arweiniad, hyfforddiant; hysbysrwydd, gwybodaeth, dysg; profiad, cynefindra; medrusrwydd, celfyddyd, crefft; cyngor meddyg, meddygyniaeth: *guidance, direction, instruction; information, knowledge; experience, familiarity; skill, art, craft; prescription, recipe, remedy.*
(b) nifer neu fintai o gyfarwyddwyr; hebryngwyr neu osgordd i gyfarwyddo: *a number or party of guides; a conduct or escort.*
- (2) Chwedl, ystori, hanes; adrodiad: *story, history; narrative, account.*

³⁷² Sturrock, *Structuralism*, 98.

³⁷³ Proinsias Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, 132-41,

³⁷⁴ See also Patrick Sims-Williams, *Britain and Early Christian Europe*, Aldershot, Brookfield, 1995, 100 ff, for a definition of *cyfarwyddyd*.

³⁷⁵ See Patrick K. Ford, “The poet as *cyfarwydd*”.

³⁷⁶ Proinsias Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, 141.

³⁷⁷ Sioned Davies, *The Four Branches of the Mabinogi*, Llandysul, 1993, 11

³⁷⁸ Brynley Roberts, *Studies on Middle Welsh Literature*, Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter, 1992, 2-15.

³⁷⁹ *GPC*, p. 686

It is the combination of meanings (1) (a) ‘information, knowledge’ and (2) ‘history; narrative’ that gives this word a broader scope, which in turn allows it to parallel the concept of *langue*, compared to *chwedl*:

- (a) stori, hanes, ffug-hanes, dameg; newydd, adroddiad, sôn, si; dywediad, ymadrodd: *story, account, legend, fable; tidings, news, report, rumour; saying, adage.*
- (b) Mater(ion), achos(ion); gweithred(oedd): *matter(s), action(s).*

Chwedl is narrower in meaning and is not etymologically connected with the word *cyfarwydd*, ‘storyteller’.³⁸⁰ If *cyfarwyddyd* is the Welsh literary parallel to the French linguistic *langue*, then the term *chwedl* equals *parole*: the corpus of all literary stories as opposed to individual tales. In Irish, a similar distinction is found between the terms *senchas, senchus* and *scél*. The former is broader in meaning and corresponds to *langue*:

- (a) old tales, ancient history, tradition.
- (b) genealogy.
- (c) traditional law.³⁸¹

Its meaning is, again, the literary tradition, the body (canon) of writings. *Scél* is more limited in meaning:

- (1) (a) story, narration, tale.
- (b) *story* told of a particular person, hence *fame, reputation*.
- (c) news, tidings.
- (d) information, account, statement.
- (2) (a) reproach, accusation.
- (b) argument, pleading, defence, excuse.
- (3) (a) happening, event, circumstance, state of affairs.
- (c) bad news, calamity, misfortune.³⁸²

Scél is very obviously parallel with *parole*. The terminology of structuralist linguistics, therefore, satisfactorily translates into literary theory: on the level of classification/genre,

³⁸⁰ For more details, see the discussion on oral tradition and the role of the poet in Chapter 2, Oral tradition and story-telling.

³⁸¹ *DIL*, 177.

³⁸² *DIL*, 83-85.

there is the opposition *langue* – *cyfarwyddyd* – *senchas* and *parole* – *chwedl* – *scél*. *Scél* is actually cognate with *chwedl* < **sk^wetlon*.

III.6 Deep structure, bound motifs and unifying principles

The primary focus of Russian Formalism was studying the way literary texts achieved their aesthetic effects, with the aim of establishing a scientific basis for literary studies. The formalist movement developed, among other things, a theory of narrative that distinguishes between the plot and the story, where the former refers to the order and manner in which the narrative presents the events, and the latter to the chronological sequence of events.

‘Story’ is simply the basic succession of events, the raw material which confronts the artist. ‘Plot’ represents the distinctive way in which the ‘story’ is made strange, creatively deformed and defamiliarized.³⁸³

Making strange and defamiliarization³⁸⁴ were key concepts of the formalist movement.

Any phonetic patterns, images or literary devices were regarded as meaningful elements in their own rights (and were, according to Shklovsky, used to achieve the effect of *ostranienie* (“making strange”; this concept pre-dates Brecht’s *Verfremdungseffekt*).

Todorov introduced the term of *reading* to unite the “close concern for the individual work with a larger awareness of the machinery of its *poetics*”.³⁸⁵

³⁸³ Terrence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics*, London, 1977, 65-6.

³⁸⁴ “A concept and term introduced by Viktor Shklovsky (1893-1984), an important member of the Russian School of Formalism. It is a translation of the Russian *ostranienie* ‘making strange’. To ‘defamiliarize’ is to make fresh, new, strange, different what is familiar and known. Through defamiliarization the writer modifies the reader’s habitual perception by drawing attention to the artifice of the text. This is a matter of literary technique. What the reader notices is not the picture of reality that is being presented but the peculiarities of the writing itself. In his essay *Art as Technique* (1917) Shklovsky makes his point pretty clear: ‘The purpose of art is to impart sensation of things as they are perceived, and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects unfamiliar, to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty of length and perception, because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. *Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important.*’ Linked with this is the idea of ‘laying bare’, or exposing, the techniques and devices by which a work of art is constructed. [...]” Coddon, *Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 213-4.

³⁸⁵ Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics*, 104.

Reading sees the individual work as an autonomous system, but it eschews the ‘sticking-to-the-text’ aspect which limits mere explication, because it is permanently aware of the text’s status as a system and of its relation to a larger system.³⁸⁶

Awareness is the key concept here: it enables one to maintain a distance from the text, thus providing a different point of view.

In relation to plot and Shklovsky, it is important to mention another Formalist concept, namely that of motif. The concept of motif as understood by Tomashevsky was *the smallest unit of plot*. Viewing motifs as “irreducible units of fiction”,³⁸⁷

[...] *story* can be defined as the sum of the motifs in their causal-chronological order, *plot* as the sum of the same motifs ordered so as to engage the emotions and develop the theme: “The esthetic function of the plot is precisely this bringing of an arrangement of motifs to the attention of the reader.”³⁸⁸ Tomashevsky calls the principle of arrangement *motivation*, and he notes that motivation is always “a compromise between objective reality and literary tradition.”³⁸⁹

Motifs are subdivided into bound (essential to the story), free (not essential), static and dynamic.³⁹⁰ According to Tomashevsky, every fictional structure has a unifying principle, which is a general thought or theme.³⁹¹ This is comparable with the Chomskian premise of deep structure. Bound motifs must be arranged so as to form a deep structure which provides the framework for free motifs to furnish the surface structure, i.e. the exact meaning or the pragmatological component.

³⁸⁶ Terrence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics*, 104-5.

³⁸⁷ Robert Scholes, *Structuralism in Literature*, New haven and London, 1974, 78.

³⁸⁸ Scholes quotes from Lemon, Lee T., and Rees, Marion J. (eds.), *Russian Formalist Criticism*. Lincoln, Nebraska: Bison Books, 1965, pp. 64-5.

³⁸⁹ Robert Scholes, *Structuralism in Literature*, 78.

³⁹⁰ Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary*, 328; Robert Scholes, *Structuralism in Literature*, 78-9.

³⁹¹ Robert Scholes, *Structuralism in Literature*, 77-8.

III.7 Defamiliarization

Defamiliarization is a literary effect intended to produce a modified perception of a work of art on the part of the reader. It should enable the reader to see things anew, and transfer his attention from the reality of the story, or picture, being presented, to the literary techniques used in the text. The concept of defamiliarization, or *ostranienje* ('making strange') was first introduced by Shklovsky in an essay entitled 'Art as Device' (1917).³⁹² Shklovsky based his concept of defamiliarization on the Gestalt theory of perception, namely that parts that constitute a whole have different characteristics from the whole they constitute. Scholes quotes Shklovsky:

As perception becomes habitual [...] it becomes automatic. [...] We see the object as though it were enveloped in a sack. We know what it is by its configuration, but we see only its silhouette. [...] Habitualization devours objects, clothes, furniture, one's wife, and the fear of war. [...] Art exists to help us recover the sensation of life; it exists to make us feel things, to make the stone *stony*. The end of art is to give a sensation of the object as seen, not as recognized. The technique of art is to make things "unfamiliar", to make forms obscure, so as to increase the difficulty and the duration of the perception. The act of perception in art is an end in itself and must be prolonged. *In art, it is our experience of the process of construction that counts, not the finished product.*³⁹³

For Shklovsky, defamiliarization is fundamental as a technique of art, and it is achieved through style and through plot. The use of defamiliarization techniques, through arranging and rearranging the events of the story, opens the events to perception, and by removing the habitual element, alters the perception of the story. By focusing on literary devices, perception is affected and changed. The existence of things is dependent on

³⁹² Available in Viktor Shklovsky, *Theory of Prose*, Moscow, 1929. English translation available online: http://books.google.com/books?id=CI31iJEmuYoC&pg=PA1&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false. A translation of the essay "Art as Device" is reprinted in (eds.) Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, *Literary Theory: an Anthology*, Malden, Oxford, Victoria, 2004, 16-18.

³⁹³ Robert Scholes, *Structuralism in Literature*, New Haven and London, 1974, 83-4. See also Viktor Shklovsky, 'Art as Device'. *Theory of Prose*, 4-6. (E-source listed above.)

perception; perception, in turn, is dependent on exposing literary devices, and this is dependent on defamiliarization. Shklovsky argues that by making art strange, by defamiliarizing it, the artist can increase the difficulty and the length of perception, which must be prolonged because perception is, after all, an aesthetic end in itself.

Defamiliarization was used by the English Romantic poets, especially Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth. In a slightly altered form, it achieved new heights and widespread acceptance as a literary technique used by Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956), German playwright, theatre director, theorist and poet. Brecht used the so-called *Verfremdungseffekt* (alienation effect) to make the audience, as well as the theatre actors, retain some critical detachment from the play, the scenery in the theatre, and the performance itself.

Despite being practised by certain writers in the 19th century, defamiliarization as a theoretical concept and term is considered to be a 20th century phenomenon. However, a close examination of the medieval Welsh and Irish narratives reveals that the idea of modifying the perception of the reader (or aural audience) cannot have been a completely alien one. The medieval texts examined for the purposes of the present research project exhibit the use of several devices that effectively affect the perception of the narrative, the attention, and sometimes the reader's point of view. Some of them indeed affect the understanding of the narrative by providing passages in the text that are difficult to understand, which according to Shklovsky, prolong the perception. It is impossible to claim that these devices were used deliberately, with the express intention of creating a

higher level of difficulty in terms of understanding; in the *Four Branches*, for example, there does not seem to be enough auctorial voice that would suggest that such practice would have been in use. The effect they had, however, sometimes seems to have been just that. Many of the devices used certainly have an aesthetic function, which affects the perception of the narrative.

Only a limited number of such devices is examined and discussed in the present research project. The devices selected are the following: triads, lists, onomastic tales (including proverbs), embedded tales, passages of poetry, taboos and *geasa*, and the watchman device. Elements such as ‘missing’ triads and onomastic tales (that is, triads and onomastic stories that were omitted from the narrative in places where the reader would expect them to appear) are not discussed on the grounds of their absence from the text due to the decisions taken by either the original author or the final redactor of the texts. All of the above mentioned devices are of a strictly literary nature.

Non-literary techniques, such as elements and references which function as a sort of ‘footnotes’ for the audience of the time,³⁹⁴ as well as intertextual references and early elements of self-conscious narrative, narcissistic narrative, and metafiction, have been excluded from the present discussion because of their different nature and the limits which the project imposed upon the research in terms of size and time. They do, however,

³⁹⁴ An example of such a ‘footnote’ for the audience of the time can be found in *Math*:
Ef a aeth, a Giluathwy, a deguyr gyt ac wynt, hyt yg Keredigyawn, yn y lle a elwir Rudlan Teiui yr awrhon;
yd oed llys yno y Pryderi; ac yn rith beird y doethant ymywn. (Ifor Williams, *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi*
(Caerdydd, 1951), 69)
Gwydion and Gilfaethwy, together with ten men, travelled to Ceredigion, to the place now called Rhuddlan
Teifi; Pryderi had a court there. They entered, disguised as poets. (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*
(Oxford, 2007), 48)

definitely deserve research projects of their own. Especially an examination of the elements of self-conscious narrative, narcissistic narrative, and metafiction would be of enormous importance in terms of changing the general perception and appreciation of medieval literature.

CHAPTER IV: THE NARRATIVE STRUCTURE

Following Tomashevsky's concept of motif as the smallest unit of plot, an irreducible unit of fiction,³⁹⁵ as described in Chapter III, bound motifs must be arranged so as to form a deep structure which provides the framework for free motifs to furnish the surface structure, i.e. the exact meaning or the pragmatical component. The following entries identify the bound motifs, i.e. the bare bones that form the deep structure for each individual text. Each story is viewed as the sum of motifs in their causal-chronological order.

IV.1 Bound motifs in the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*

IV.1.1 *Pwyll*

- The stag hunt/the insult of Arawn,
- Pwyll in Annwfn/the redressing of insult (the killing of Hafgan),
- The return of Pwyll to his world.
- The meeting with Rhiannon,
- The promise to Gwawl/betrayal of Rhiannon,
- The tricking of Gwawl/badger-in-the-bag,
- Pwyll's wedding to Rhiannon,
- The birth of Rhiannon's child,
- Claw/the disappearance of the child,

³⁹⁵ Robert Scholes, *Structuralism in Literature*, 78.

- Rhiannon's punishment,
- Claw/the reappearance of the child,
- The return of the boy to Pwyll's court,
- The restoration of Rhiannon,
- The naming of the child.

IV.1.2 *Branwen*

- Matholwch's arrival,
- Branwen's wedding,
- The mutilation of the horses/insult to Matholwch,
- Redress of the insult to Matholwch,
- The insult to Branwen/dissatisfaction in Ireland,
- Bendigeidfran's journey to Ireland,
- The killing of the Irishmen in the bags,
- The temporary peace between the Irish and the Welsh,
- Efnysien's revenge/murder of Gwern and cauldron of rebirth,
- The death of Branwen and escape of the seven men/beheading of Bendigeidfran,
- The crowning of Caswallon son of Beli in London,
- The exile of Manawydan and his men,
- The five pregnant women in Ireland.

IV.1.3 *Manawydan*

- Pryderi's offer to Manawydan/alliance of the two houses,
- Manawydan's marriage to Rhiannon,
- The disappearance of flocks and herds,
- The crafts taken up by Manawydan and Pryderi in England,
- The hunt for the white boar,
- The capture and disappearance of Pryderi,
- The capture and disappearance of Rhiannon,
- The disappearance of crops,
- The pregnant mouse/the hanging of the thief,
- The identity of the mouse – the cleric, the priest and the bishop,
- The return of Pryderi and Rhiannon.

IV.1.4 *Math*

- Math's 'special attribute',³⁹⁶
- Gilfaethwy's desire for the foot maiden Goewin,
- The stealing of pigs/insult to Pryderi,
- The rape of Goewin/betrayal of king/the insult to Goewin,
- The killing of Pryderi,
- The punishment of Gwydion and Gilfaethwy,

³⁹⁶ Also referred to as *cynneddf*; this concept is further discussed in more detail later in this chapter when defamiliarization techniques are discussed.

- The restoration of the two brothers,
- Aranrhod's failure of the virginity test/the birth of Dylan and Lleu,
- Gwydion's discovery of Lleu in a chest,
- The meeting with Aranrhod,
- The three curses,
- The undoing of the three curses and the creation of Blodeuedd,
- Blodeuedd meets Gronw,
- The conspiracy against Lleu,
- Lleu's murder,
- The finding and healing of Lleu,
- Blodeuedd's punishment,
- Gronw's death.

IV.2 Bound motifs in the selected Irish tales

IV.2.1 *Compert Con Culainn*

- The elopement of Dechtire and her companions,
- Bird hunt and search for the maiden,
- The hospitality of the strangers and discovery of the maiden and her companions,
- The birth of a child who becomes Dechtire's foster-child,
- The disappearance of the house and the return to Emain Macha,
- The death of the child,
- Dechtire drinks from a copper vessel and conceives,
- The termination of Dechtire's pregnancy,
- The birth of Dechtire's child,
- The naming of the child,
- The fostering arrangements.

IV.2.2 *Aided Óenfir Aífe*

- Cú Chulainn begets a son by Aífe,
- Cú Chulainn imposes a *geis* on his unborn child,
- Connla's quest for his father,
- Cú Chulainn's failure to recognize his son,
- Connla's death.

IV.2.3 *Tochmarc Emire*

- The feast at Conchobor's house,
- The decision that Cú Chulainn needs a wife,
- The search for a suitable wife and meeting with Emer,
- The disapproval of the potential union between Cú Chulainn and Emer by Forgall (Emer's father),
- Forgall imposes a task on Cú Chulainn,
- The training with Scáthach,
- Cú Chulainn's heroic deeds,
- The union with Emer.

IV.2.4 *Mesca Ulad*

- The division of Ireland,
- Conchobor invites Cú Chulainn and Findtan to the feast of Samuin,
- Cú Chulainn and Findtan are asked to give up their respective shares of the province in Conchobor's favour for a year,
- Both set exactly the same conditions,
- Neither is willing to postpone or give up his feast in favour of the other,
- Senchae suggests splitting the night into two parts and attending both feasts on the same night,

- The men attend Findtan's feast,
- The men lose their way en route to Cú Chulainn's court, ending up in Cú Roí mac Dairi's territory,
- The prophecy regarding the arrival of the Ulaid,
- The betrayal of the Ulaid's trust – incarceration in the iron house,
- The victory of the Ulaid,
- Feast at Cú Chulainn's court and friendship with Ailill.

IV.2.5 *Echtra Nerai*

- The captives on the gallows and Ailill's dare,
- Nera and the captive search for a drink,
- Nera's journey into the *síd*,
- Nera and the woman offered to him by the king of the *síd*,
- The blind man and the lame man,
- Nera's warning to his people,
- Nera's return to the *síd* to save his family and his chattels,
- The destruction of the *síd*.

IV.2.6 *Táin Bó Fraích*

- Findabair falls in love with Fráech's fame,
- Fráech goes to seek Findabair,

- Findabair refuses to elope with Fráech but gives him her ring,
- Ailill and Medb request dowry and Fráech's involvement in the cattle raid of Cúailnge when he asks for Findabair,
- Ailill and Medb try to get Fráech killed by setting him tasks,
- Salmon swallows the ring,
- Findabair helps Fráech fight the monster,
- Ailill and Medb decide to kill Findabair, ostensibly because she no longer has the ring,
- The ring is 'found', Fráech wins Findabair and promises to take part in the cattle raid of Cúailnge,
- Fráech's cows are stolen, and his wife and three sons are taken,
- Fráech enlists the help of Conall Cernach and a woman of Ireland in the search for his wife, sons and cows,
- Fráech's wife, sons and cows are recovered.

IV.2.7 *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*

- Two sets of messengers (from Conchobor and from Ailill and Medb) arrive to ask Mac Dathó for the hound,
- Mac Dathó's wife advises tricking the parties by promising the hound to both,
- Mac Dathó follows her advice and organizes a feast where a pig is to be divided by the most heroic warrior,

- Every warrior wants to be the one to divide the pig,
- Conall Cernach wins the contest and divides the pig, thereby insulting the men of Connaught,
- Combat and slaughter,
- Ailill and Medb's flight and the humiliation of Conchobor.

IV.2.8 *Longes Mac n-Uislenn*

- The pregnant woman and the scream of the unborn child,
- Cathbad's prophecy,
- The slaying of Derdriu is suggested and rejected,
- The fostering of Derdriu in isolation,
- Derdriu meets Noísiu and falls in love with him,
- The elopement of Derdriu and the sons of Uisliu,
- The king of Scotland desires Derdriu,
- The return of the sons of Uisliu and Derdriu to Ireland and the betrayal of trust,
- The slaying of the sons of Uisliu,
- Fergus' retaliation,
- Derdriu's sorrow and suffering under Conchobor,
- Derdriu's death.

IV.3 Unifying principles in the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*

The unifying principles that can be seen in the Four Branches are the themes of betrayal and alliance (closely interwoven with insult, redress and honour) and dynastic continuity are presented in the following table.

	Betrayal/alliance	Dynastic continuity
<i>Pwyll</i>	Alliance Pwyll-Rhiannon-Arawn, Teyrnon Insult to Arawn Insult to Rhiannon Honour of Pwyll (threatened and restored) Honour of Rhiannon (threatened and restored)	Continuity of Pwyll's line, or what happened to Rhiannon's child
<i>Branwen</i>	Alliance Branwen-Matholwch-Bendigeidfran Insult to Matholwch Insult to Branwen Insult to Efnysien Honour of Branwen (defended and restored)	Continuity of Branwen's/Bendigeidfran's line, or the destiny of Branwen's son

<i>Manawydan</i>	Alliance Pryderi/Rhiannon- Manawydan Insult to Manawydan (Caswallon) Insult to Manwydan (Llwyd Fab Cil Coed) Honour of Manawydan (restored)	Preservation of the line of Rhiannon (Pryderi) and Manawydan (by marriage), or the saving of Pryderi
<i>Math</i>	Alliance Gilfaethwy/Gwydion-Math, Alliance Gwydion-Math- Lleu Alliance Lleu-Blodeuedd Insult to Math Insult to Goewin Insult to Aranrhod Insult to Lleu Insult to Pryderi Honour of Goewin (threatened and restored) Honour of Aranrhod (threatened; attempt at restoration in form of	The continuity of Math's line, or the destiny of potential heirs (Dylan, who “makes for the sea” and is killed by his uncle, and Lleu), intertwined with the continuity of the family of Dôn, or the unfortunate marriage of Lleu

	Curses and avoidance of Lleu and Gwydion) Honour of Math, Gwydion, and Lleu (restored)	
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IV.3.1 Betrayal and alliance

IV.3.1.1 *Pwyll*

Betrayal and alliance are present in all four branches: in *Pwyll*, there is the alliance of the royal house of Pwyll, prince of Dyfed, with Arawn of Annwn. The alliance with Arawn begins with an insult and redress, when Pwyll unwittingly insults Arawn in the hunting scene by killing Arawn's stag:

Ac ar hynny y marchawc a doeth attaw ef, a dywedut ual hynn wrthaw, "A unben," heb ef, "mi a wnn pwy wytti, ac ny chyuarchaf i well it." "Ie," heb ef, "ac atuyd y mae arnat o anryded ual nas dyliei." "Dioer," heb ef, "nyt teilygdawt uy anryded a'm etteil am hynny." "A unben," heb ynteu, "beth amgen?" "Y rof i a Duw," hep ynteu, "dy anwybot dy hun a'th ansyberwyt." "Pa ansyberwyt, unben, a weleist ti arnaf i?" "Ny weleis ansyberwyt uwy ar wr," hep ef, "no gyrru yr echwys a ladsysei y carw e ymdeith, a llithiau dy erchwys dy hun arnaw: hynny," hep ef, "ansyberwyt oed: a chyn nyt ymdialwyf a thi, y rof i a Duw," hep ef, "mi a wnafo anglot itt guerth can carw."³⁹⁷

³⁹⁷ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 2.

Then the rider came up to him, and spoke to him like this: 'Sir,' he said, 'I know who you are, but I will not greet you.'

'Well,' said Pwyll, 'perhaps your rank is such that you are not obliged to.'

'God knows,' he said, 'it's not the level of my rank that prevents me.'

'What else, sir?' said Pwyll.

'Between me and God,' he said, 'your own lack of manners and discourtesy.'

'What discourtesy, sir, have you seen in me?'

Following the insult to Arawn, Pwyll's honour must be redressed by swapping roles and countenance with Arawn for a set time, and fighting a duel in his stead. Pwyll's honour greatly increases due to his behaviour towards Arawn's wife during that time. There is also the alliance of Pwyll with Rhiannon, and the betrayal of Rhiannon by Pwyll, first by sheer stupidity when he allows himself to be tricked by Gwawl (which results in Rhiannon being promised to Gwawl), and later when he allows her to be punished as requested by his noblemen.

Rhiannon's honour is restored and the insult redressed when Teyrnion realises his adopted son is actually the lost son of Pwyll and returns him to the court, whereby Rhiannon is restored to her former position. This also leads to the alliance of Pwyll with Teyrnion.

IV.3.1.2 *Branwen*

In *Branwen*, there is the alliance of the house of the children of Llŷr (Bendigeidfran, Manawydan and Branwen), and thereby the Island of the Mighty, with Ireland, namely with the house of Matholwch.

“By ryw neges yw yr eidaw ef?” heb y brenhin. “Mynnu ymgyuathrachu a thidy, Arglwyd,” heb wynt. “Y erchi Branwen uerch Lyr y doeth, ac os da genhyt ti, ef a uyn ymrwymaw ynys y Kedeirn ac Iwerdon y gyt, ual y bydynt gadarnach.”³⁹⁸

‘I have seen no greater discourtesy in a man,’ he said, ‘than to drive away the pack that had killed the stag, and feed your own pack on it; that,’ he said, ‘was discourtesy: and although I will not take revenge upon you, between me and God,’ he said, ‘I will bring shame upon you to the value of a hundred stags.’

(Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 3-4)

³⁹⁸ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 30.

‘What sort of request does he have?’ said the king.

Tragically, following the insult to him by Efnysien (who mutilates the horses), Matholwch betrays the alliance by mistreating and insulting Branwen, regardless of the fact that his honour has been restored by Bendigeidfran's gifts. Branwen's honour must be defended by Bendigeidfran and his men, the battle ending in bloodshed and further betrayal, this time by Efnysien.

The insult to Efnysien is that of not asking his counsel, and his revenge is the murder of Branwen's child, who represents the continuation of the line. Restoring the honour of Branwen has tragic consequences of four deaths: that of Bendigeidfran (beheading after being wounded with a poisoned spear in battle), of Caradog (broken heart), of Branwen (broken heart) and of her son (who was thrown in the fire by Efnysien).

IV.3.1.3 *Manawydan*

In *Manawydan*, we witness the alliance of the house of Pryderi with the house of Manawydan through marriage to Rhiannon, Pryderi's mother, following the insult to Manawydan by Caswallon:

“Seith cantref Dyuet yr edewit y mi,” heb y Pryderi, “a Riannon uy mam yssyd yno. Mi a rodaf it honno, a medyant y seith cantref genthi. A chyny bei itti o gyuoeth namyn y seith cantref hynny, nyt oes seith cantref well noc wy. Kicua, uerch Wyn Gloyw, yw uy gwreic inheu,” heb ef. “A chyn bo enwedigaeth y

‘He wishes to unite your two families, lord,’ they said. ‘He has come to ask for Branwen daughter of Llŷr, and if you agree, he wishes to join together the Island of the Mighty and Ireland so that they might be stronger.’ (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 23)

kyuoeth y mi, bit y mwynant y ti a Riannon. A pheï mynhut gyuoeth eiryoet,
aduyd y caffut ti [waeth] hwnnw.”³⁹⁹

The insult that Caswallon son of Beli has committed by disinheritng Manawydan is thus redressed by replacing his riches with those of Pryderi/Rhiannon and by the alliance of the two houses.

The second insult, or rather betrayal, of Manawydan (through his family) is that by Llwyd fab Cil Coed, who casts a spell on Pryderi and Rhiannon as revenge for the treatment of Gwawl at the hands of Pwyll, Rhiannon’s first husband and Pryderi’s father. This insult is redressed by Manawydan’s catching of the mouse (Llwyd’s wife) and making Llwyd restore things to their previous state. The honour of Manawydan, and through him directly, the honour and lives of Rhiannon and Pryderi, is restored by Manawydan’s cunning and the sense of justice he displays in the above scene.

IV.3.1.4 *Math*

Math is rife with betrayal and insult. It begins with Gilfaethwy and Gwydion’s betrayal of Math the king, which, on Gwydion’s part at least is a double betrayal: he creates a war in order to get the king to leave the foot maiden, and then either one or

³⁹⁹ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 49-50.

‘The seven cantrefs of Dyfed were left to me,’ said Pryderi, ‘and Rhiannon, my mother lives there. I shall give her to you, together with the authority over those seven cantrefs. Although it may be the only realm you have, there are no better seven cantrefs. My wife is Cigfa, daughter of Glyn Gloyw,’ he said. “And although the realm will be in my name, let the benefits be yours and Rhiannon’s. And if you ever wanted a realm of your own, perhaps you could take that one.’
(Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 35)

both⁴⁰⁰ brothers rape the foot maiden, who is, because of the king's *cynnedf*, untouchable and should forever remain chaste. Worse still, the rape takes place in the king's chamber, and in his bed.

Enteu Uath a gyrchwys e ystauell, ac a beris kyweiraw lle idaw y benelinyaw, ual y caei dodi y draet ym plyn croth y uorwyn. "Arglwyd," heb y Goewyn, "keis uorwyn a uo is dy draet weithon. Gwreic wyf i." "Pa ystyr yw hynny?" "Kyrch, Arglwyd, a doeth am uym penn, a hynny yn diargel, ac ny buum distaw inheu. Ny bu yn y llys nys guypei. Sef a doeth, dy nyeint ueibon dy chwaer, Arglwyd, Gwydyon uab Don a Gilfaethwy uab Don. A threis arnaf a orugant a chywilyd y titheu, a chyscu a wnaethpwyd genhyf, a hynny i'th ystauell ac i'th wely."⁴⁰¹

This is also an insult to Goewin the foot maiden, whose status should automatically protect her from such fate. By tricking Pryderi to give away the swine of Annwfn, Gwydion also insults Pryderi, who dies in a duel trying to restore his honour. To restore Goewin's and his own honour, Math takes Goewin as his wife and gives her authority over his kingdom; as his own honour-restoring revenge, he changes the brothers' shape three times and has them spend three years in wilderness in shape of three different kinds of animal, changing gender yearly, mating with one another and producing offspring. This is followed by forgiveness and restoration of the alliance between Math and Gwydion in the form of Gwydion once again being Math's advisor.

⁴⁰⁰ Goewin was 'slept with'. Both brothers are responsible for the rape, since Gwydion at least organised it, if he did not physically participate in it, and Gilfaethwy committed the physical act of rape. There is some debate regarding this issue.

⁴⁰¹ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 74.

Math went into his chamber, and had a place for him prepared to recline so that he could put his feet in the maiden's lap.

'Lord,' said Goewin, 'look for another virgin to hold your feet now – I am a woman.'

'How can that be?'

'I was assaulted, lord, quite openly, nor did I keep quiet – everyone in the court knew about it. It was your nephews who came, lord, your sister's sons, Gwydion son of Dôn and Gilfaethwy son of Dôn. And they forced me, and shamed *you*, and I was taken in your chamber and in your very bed.'

(Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 52.)

Gwydion's insult to Aranrhod occurs when he suggests her as a potential future foot maiden, and she fails the virginity test and bears two children in front of the king, and it is reinforced every time Gwydion turns up with Lleu in front of her. Her revenge is the three destinies she swears on her son Lleu. Her honour is not properly restored in the branch. Gwydion's insult to Aranrhod is in her shame connected with anything to do with Gwydion and Lleu, and it is avenged by tricking Aranrhod to undo two of the three curses, and in the attempt to create a wife for Lleu.

Blodeuedd's betrayal of Lleu (her affair with Gronw and her attempt to murder Lleu through Gronw) is at the same time an insult to Math and Gwydion,⁴⁰² both of whom helped with her creation and bestowed riches upon Lleu and her after the wedding. The restoration of Lleu's honour, and indirectly through that the restoration of the honour of Math and Gwydion, is achieved through the finding and healing of Lleu, and the punishment of Blodeuedd (by Gwydion and his magic), and through Lleu's revenge on Gronw. Blodeuedd's betrayal does not bring a new alliance, or re-establish an old one; it does, in a way strengthen the old alliance between Math and Gwydion, and Math and Lleu.

⁴⁰² An insult to both Math and Gwydion because both of them brought up and provided for Lleu, and also participated in the creation of his wife.

IV.3.2 The dynastic continuation

IV.3.2.1 *Pwyll*

The unifying principle of the dynastic continuation is also present in all four branches, but more subtly in some than in others. In *Pwyll*, it is very obviously there: after three years without children, Rhiannon and Pwyll's newborn son disappears, Rhiannon is accused of his murder, and after a request from his noblemen, Pwyll allows her to be punished as requested by his noblemen. When their son is restored to them, the continuation of their line is assured, and Rhiannon's punishment ends.

IV.3.2.1 *Branwen*

In *Branwen*, circumstances conspire against the children of Llŷr. Bendigeidfran's son Caradog, who is left in command of the Island of the Mighty when Bendigeidfran and his men go to Ireland upon learning about Branwen's misfortune and mistreatment, dies of a broken heart when Caswallon son of Beli overruns the Island of the Mighty, kills six of his seven men and is crowned king in London.

“Pa daruu,” heb wynteu, “y Gradawc uab Bran, a’r seithwyr a edewit y gyt ac ef yn yr ynys honn?” “Dyuot Caswallawn am eu penn, a llad y chwegwyr, a thorri ohonaw ynteu Gradawc y galon o aniuget, am welet y cledyf yn llad y wyr, ac na wydat pwy a’ e lladei. Caswallawn a daroed idaw wiscaw llen hut amdanaw, ac ny welei neb ef yn llad y gwyr, namyn y cledyf. Ny uynhei Gaswallawn y lad ynteu, y nei uab y geuynderw oed. (A hwnnw uu y trydyd dyn a torres y gallon o aniuget).⁴⁰³

⁴⁰³ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 45-6.

“What happened to Caradog son of Brân and the seven men who were left with him on this Island?” they said.

Bendigeidfran himself is wounded in the foot with a poisoned spear and orders his head to be cut off. Branwen's son by Matholwch, Gwern, is murdered by Efnysien, who throws him into the fire, and Branwen herself dies of a broken heart because of that.

A chyuodi y uynydd, a chymryt y mab erwyd y traet, a heb ohir, na chael o dyn yn y ty gauael arnaw, yny want y mab yn wysc y benn yn y gynneu.⁴⁰⁴

“Oy a uab Duw,” heb hi, “guae ui o'm ganedigaeth. Da a dwy ynys a diffeithwyd o'm achaws i.” A doddi ucheneit uawr, a thorri y chalon ar hynny. A gwneuthur bed petruall idi, a'e chladu yno yglan Alaw.⁴⁰⁵

The only one left to ensure continuation of the line is Manawydan, who is only a minor character in *Branwen* and is at the end of it both childless and disinherited.

IV.3.2.3 *Manwydan*

In *Manawydan*, the problem of the continuation of the royal line that resulted from the action in *Branwen* is continued. Manawydan acquires a grown-up son by marrying Rhiannon, namely Pryderi, which, strictly speaking, does not comprise the continuation of Manawydan's line, but a joining of two houses. The problem of dynastic continuation in *Manawydan* is present in the form of the preservation of the existing members of the family.

“Caswallon attacked them and six men were killed, and Caradog's heart broke from bewilderment at seeing the sword kill his men and not knowing who killed them. Caswallon had put on a magic cloak so that no-one could see him killing the men – they could only see the sword. Caswallon did not want to kill Caradog – he was his nephew, his cousin's son. (And he was one of the Three People who Broke their Hearts from Sorrow.) (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 33)

⁴⁰⁴ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 43.

And he gets up, and takes the boy by the feet, and immediately, before anyone in the house can lay a hand on him, he hurls the boy head-first into the fire. (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 31-2)

⁴⁰⁵ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 45.

“Oh son of God,” she said, “woe that I was ever born. Two good islands have been laid waste because of me!” She gives a mighty sigh, and with that her heart breaks. And they make a four-sided grave for her and bury her there on the banks of the Alaw. (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 33)

IV.3.2.4 *Math*

In *Math*, the problem is more complex, but obviously an important one. From the fact that Math's foot maiden must remain a virgin, and from the lack of a wife before the rape of the foot maiden, it is implied that the king might be somehow infertile, perhaps as a result of an unexplained *cynneddf*.⁴⁰⁶ According to Satoko Ito, it is theoretically possible that, following the rape, Goewin could have given birth to a child, who would, since she was then the king's wife, have been legally viewed as the king's child and heir:

... [Math] decides to compensate for Goewin's loss of virginity by marrying her and by giving his *cyfoeth* into her hands. This would be understood as his promise to make her son heir to the throne. Yet as Goewin is dismissed from the story, the birth of her child is never mentioned, nor his inheritance.⁴⁰⁷

Curiously, as the story unfolds, the role of the heir to the throne is taken by Lleu Llaw Gyffes.

His mother Aranrhod, the proposed potential future foot maiden for the king, fails the virginity test, and gives birth to two boys. Failing the virginity test brings shame on her on several levels: as an unmarried woman who failed to preserve her virginity, she is "dishonoured"⁴⁰⁸ by the tainting of her sexual purity";⁴⁰⁹ as a *twyllforwyn*, a 'false virgin',

⁴⁰⁶ For another interesting view on the subject of Math, his unmarried status and his dependence on the foot maiden, see John Carey, "A British myth of origins?" *History of Religions*, Vol. 31 (August 1991), 24-38.

⁴⁰⁷ Satoko Ito, "The Three Romances and the Four Branches", 321.

⁴⁰⁸ This is connected with the concept of *sarhaed*: "[s]arhaed was originally the act of insult which brings shame and infringes honour, notionally represented among the insular Celtic peoples by the face, Welsh *wyneb*, Breton *eneb* and Irish *enech*." Morfydd E. Owen, "Shame and reparation: women's place in the kin", in D. Jenkins and M. Owen, *The Welsh Law of Women*, Cardiff, 1980, 44.

⁴⁰⁹ Morfydd E. Owen, "Shame", 45.

she would likely be “dealt with with remarkably little ceremony”,⁴¹⁰ just like a woman whose pre-marital claim of virginity is challenged by the groom.⁴¹¹ Because she has effectively just given birth in front of the king and other people, preserving her honour is virtually impossible, as is vouching for her virginity by her “*cyfneseifiad* (‘next of kin’, “defined as her parents and brothers and sisters”).⁴¹² Should she ever find a husband after this, she would be reduced from the status of *morwyn*, ‘virgin’, to *gwraig*, ‘non-virgin’. Her shame is unavoidable, irreversible, and impossible to conceal.

The first of the two boys she ‘drops’⁴¹³ when she steps over Math’s wand, Dylan Ail Ton, makes for the sea immediately (and is later killed by a blow by his uncle Gofannon); the second one, Lleu Llaw Gyffes (as Aranrhod later names him), is picked up by Gwydion and hidden in a chest until later. Lleu is brought up by Gwydion in a fatherly way, which has prompted some scholars to assume he was in fact the product of

⁴¹⁰ Christopher McAll, “The normal paradigms of a woman’s life in the Irish and Welsh texts”, in D. Jenkins and M. Owen, *The Welsh Law of Women*, 9.

⁴¹¹ “Instead of her proper share of the marriage wealth in the form of *agweddi* due to her on her legitimate separation from her husband after nine nights of marriage, she is given a one-year old steer with a greased tail. In the unlikely event of her being able to keep hold of the animal by its tail, she is allowed to keep it.” Christopher McAll, “The normal paradigm”, 9.

⁴¹² Christopher McAll, “The normal paradigm”, 9.

⁴¹³ “A uorwyn,” heb ef, “a wyt uorwyn di?” “Ny wnn i amgen no’ m bot.” Yna y kymerth ynteu yr hutlath a’y chamu. “Camha di dros honn,” heb ef, “ac ot wyt uorwyn, mi a ednebydaf.” Yna y camawd hitheu dros yr hutlath, ac ar y cam hwnnw, adaw mab brasuelyn mawr a oruc. Sef a wnaeth y mab, dodi diaspat uchel. Yn ol diaspat y mab, kyrchu y drws a oruc hi, ac ar hynny adaw y ryw bethan ohonei; a chyn cael o neb gueleit yr eil olwc arnaw, Guydyon a’y kymerth, ac a droes llen o bali yn y gylch, ac a’e cudyawd. Sef y cudyawd, y mywn llaw gist is traed y wely.

Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 77.

“Maiden,” he said, “are you a virgin?”

“That is my belief.” Then he took his magic wand and bent it. “Step over this,” he said, “and if you are a virgin I shall know.”

Then she stepped over the magic wand, and as she stepped she dropped a large, sturdy, yellow-haired boy. The boy gave a loud cry. After the boy’s cry she made for the door, but as she went she dropped a small something. Before anyone could get a second glimpse of it, Gwydion took it and wrapped a sheet of brocaded silk around it and hid it. He hid it in a small chest at the foot of his bed. (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 54)

incest between Gwydion and Aranrhod;⁴¹⁴ however, since Gwydion takes care of, i.e. fosters, Lleu for a year and a day, the question of Lleu's biological paternity becomes somewhat academic: according to *Llyfr Iorwerth*,⁴¹⁵ fostering a child for a year and a day determined the legal status of that child so that the child was entitled to inherit a portion of the land belonging to his foster-father.

As has been continually emphasised, it was not "legitimacy" of birth but acceptance by the father which determined the status of a child in Welsh law [...] For the first of the three circumstances which prevented a kin-group from disowning a son was that he had been begotten in the "legal bed" and reared at the man's expense for a year and a day. We are not told what made the bed legal [...] Maintenance of the child was a necessary condition if the child was born in what we may call regular wedlock; in other circumstances it was a sufficient condition.⁴¹⁶

Gwydion leaves us in no doubt as to whether or not he accepts Lleu as his own: he fosters him for more than the legally prescribed period of a year and a day, trains him in the use of arms and in manners, confronts Aranrhod regarding the curses, and, judging by Math's increased interest in Lleu, commends him to Math as his man (probably around the age of fourteen).⁴¹⁷

Andrew Welsh, in "Doubling and Incest in the Mabinogi",⁴¹⁸ suggests that several tales of the *Four Branches* of the Mabinogi contain doubles, i.e. twin characters: Pwyll and Arawn appear as such a twin pair in the First Branch, Nisien and Efnysien in the Second Branch, and there are multiple pairs of 'twins' in the Fourth Branch: Gwydion

⁴¹⁴ See Andrew Welsh, "Doubling and Incest in the Mabinogi", *Speculum* 65 (1990), 356.

⁴¹⁵ Aled Rhys William, *Llyfr Iorwerth : a critical text of the "Venedotian Code" of medieval Welsh law, mainly from B.M.Cotton ms. Titus Dii*, Cardiff, 1960, paragraph 49.

⁴¹⁶ D. Jenkins and M. Owen, *The Welsh Law of Women*, 90-1.

⁴¹⁷ See R. R. Davies, "The status of women and the practice of marriage in late medieval Wales", in D. Jenkins and M. Owen, *The Welsh Law of Women*, 70-1.

⁴¹⁸ Andrew Welsh, "Doubling and Incest in the Mabinogi", *Speculum* 65 (1990), 344-362.

and Gilfaethwy, Dylan and Lleu, Goewin and Aranrhod.⁴¹⁹ The premise that Goewin and Aranrhod are doubles or two representations of the same character, just as Gwydion and Gilfaethwy are themselves doubles, as are Dylan and Lleu, possibly helps explain why one of each pairs of ‘twins’ disappears from the story in roughly the first third of the text. The disappearances certainly add to the intrigue, but are rather confusing and less than helpful for the purpose of identification of the motifs. A possible speculation might be that Dylan, the first-born who ‘does not survive’, is the product of rape (and the weaker of the ‘twins’, just as according to Andrew Welsh, Gilfaethwy is the weaker of the pair of ‘twins’ that is Gilfaethwy and Gwydion⁴²⁰), while Lleu is the product of the ‘union with’ Math (Goewin’s marriage with Math, while gestation is performed by Aranrhod in place of Goewin) and is brought up by Gwydion, who is his uncle (and also possibly his father⁴²¹) and the king’s advisor and would therefore be the person to logically foster the boy.

Regardless of the unsolved question of Lleu’s paternity, he seems to be the heir to Math’s throne, since Math gives him land after he marries Blodeuedd. Then, unfortunately, the continuation of the line (be it Math’s or Gwydion’s) seems to stop again, as Lleu has no children by Blodeuedd, and cannot have a wife because of the curse sworn upon him by his mother. This curse, unlike the other two, is never undone in the story, and cannot be undone properly due to the way it is formulated by Aranrhod:

“Ac mi a dyngaf dynghet idaw,” heb hi, “na chaffo wreic uyth, o’r genedyl yssyd ar y dayar honn yr awr honn.”⁴²²

⁴¹⁹ Goewin and Aranrhod are the only pair not mentioned as ‘twins’ by Welsh.

⁴²⁰ Andrew Welsh, “Doubling and Incest in the Mabinogi”, 359-60.

⁴²¹ Andrew Welsh, “Doubling and Incest in the Mabinogi”, 360.

⁴²² Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 83.

Both previous curses sworn upon Lleu by his mother are formulated in a way that makes it possible for them to be undone:

“Ie,” heb hi, “mi a dynghaf dynghet iddaw, na chaffo enw yny caffo y genhyf i.”⁴²³

“Ie,” heb hitheu, “minheu a dynghaf dynghet y’r mab hwnn, na chaffo arueu byth yny gwisgof i amdanaw.”⁴²⁴

Aranrhod very clearly specifies the conditions for undoing of the first two curses. Only when she herself is willing to provide him with a name and weapons (or, as it transpires, is tricked into providing him with them) will he have them. The curses are not formulated so as to be easy to undo, but they are not impossible to undo, either. The third curse, however, she formulates in such a way that it can only be undone by magic, and still excludes the possibility of any wife of Lleu’s ever being a real woman, one of the same race as himself.⁴²⁵

At the end of the Fourth Branch, Lleu is effectively lord over Gwynedd, which makes him the continuation of Math’s line, but he cannot have a woman who belongs to the human race as a wife, which in turn makes it impossible for him to produce an heir who would be entirely human. His union with a wife made out of flowers remains

‘And I will swear a destiny upon him,’ she said, ‘that he will never have a wife from the race that is on this earth at present.’ (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 58)

⁴²³ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 79.

‘Well,’ she said, ‘I will swear a destiny that he shall not get a name until he gets one from me.’ (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 55)

⁴²⁴ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 81.

‘Well,’ she said, ‘I will swear a destiny on this boy that he shall never get weapons until I arm him myself.’ (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 57)

⁴²⁵ This last curse is interesting in terms of comparison with the situation in *Culhwch ac Olwen*, namely the curse imposed on Culhwch by his step-mother.

childless, and it seems unlikely that another union of a similar sort would be attempted.

Like Math, Lleu is seemingly infertile. Regarding the dynastic continuation, the story turns full circle and returns to the starting point where the king has no heir and no means of producing one.

IV.4 Unifying principles in the selected Irish texts

The unifying principles identified in the eight Irish texts selected for the purpose of this thesis are the themes of betrayal and alliance (closely connected with honour and retaliation, which is sometimes absent and sometimes disproportionate), parting/separation (or even death) of lovers/family members (connected with reuniting thereof) and the (perceived, but not necessarily actual) superiority of kings. There is a parallel between the unifying principles in the Welsh and Irish texts, since both sets of texts share the themes of betrayal and alliance.

	Alliance and betrayal	Parting/separation (or death) of lovers or family members	King's (perceived) superiority
<i>Compert Con Culainn</i>	Alliance Deichtine – Túatha Dé Dannan (Lug); Cú Chulainn – the important figures of the Ulaid	Separation Deichtine – foster-child; Deichtine - unborn baby	Superiority of Conchobor over everyone – they all submit to his judgement
<i>Aided Óenfir Aífe</i>	Betrayal of unborn son Alliance Connla-men of Conchobor	Separation of Cú Chulainn from Aífe and his unborn son Death of Connla as	Superiority of Conchobor (and his men) over the people of Connla

	and Cú Chulainn	final separation of father and son	(and Aífe)
<i>Tochmarc Emire</i>	Alliance Cú Chulainn-Scáthach Alliance Cú Chulainn-Aífe Alliance Scáthach- Aífe Attempted alliance Cú Chulainn- Rúad Betrayal Cú Chulainn-Rúad's daughter	Separation of Cú Chulainn and Emer (imposed on them by her father)	Superiority of Conchobor (description of his power and chattels)
<i>Mesca Ulad</i>	Alliance Conchobor-Cú Chulainn-Findtan Alliance Ulaid-Ailill Betrayal Ailill and Medb-Ulaid (betrayal of trust)	Parting of Cú Chulainn and Findtan with their portions of the territory of the Ulaid	Superiority of Conchobor (by obtaining rule over all the territory of the Ulaid)
<i>Echtra Nerai</i>	Alliance Nera- woman of the <i>síd</i> 'Alliance' Nera-	Parting of Nera and the woman whenever he leaves	Superiority of Ailill and Medb over the king of <i>síd</i>

	king of the <i>síd</i> Alliance king-blind man-lame man Betrayal of the king of <i>síd</i> (by the woman and Nera)	the <i>síd</i> Reunion of Nera and the woman when he returns to the <i>síd</i>	
<i>Táin Bó Fraích</i>	Alliance Fráech- people of the <i>síd</i> Alliance Fráech- Findabair Betrayal of Findabair by Ailill and Medb (want to kill her) and alliance Ailill and Medb- Fráech Alliance Fráech- Conall Cernach Alliance Fráech- Conall Cernach- woman	Separation of Fráech from his wife and three sons, and his cows	Superiority of Findabair (it is inappropriate for her to elope)
<i>Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó</i>	Attempted alliance Mac Dathó-	Parting of Mac Dathó and the	Superiority of Mac Dathó over

	kingdoms of Conchobor and Ailill and Medb	hound	Conchobor and Ailill and Medb
<i>Longes Mac n- Uislenn</i>	Alliance Derdriu- Leborcham Alliance Derdriu- sons of Uisliu 'Betrayal' of Conchobor by Derdriu and the sons of Uisliu Alliance sons of Uisliu-king of Scotland Alliance sons of Uisliu-all Ireland (Consequently betrayal of Conchobor by all Ireland) Betrayal of the sons of Uisliu by Conchobor	Parting of Derdriu and her parents; isolation of Derdriu Parting of the sons of Uisliu and Derdriu from Ireland Parting of Derdriu and Noísiu (death) Parting of the sons of Uisliu (death) Exile of 3000 Ulstermen Exile of Fergus	Conchobor's superiority over everyone and everything, including fate and prophecy

	<p>(breaking of the promise)</p> <p>Betrayal of the sons of Uisliu by Fergus (in form of accepting invitations to banquets)</p> <p>Alliance sons of Uisliu-Fiachu mac Fergusa</p> <p>Betrayal of the sons of Uisliu by the servant of the king of Scotland (and the king himself)</p> <p>Alliance</p> <p>Conchobor- Éogan mac</p> <p>Durthacht/betrayal of the brothers' trust and betrayal of Fergus, Dubthach and Cormac mac</p>		
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	Conchobuir Alliance Fergus- Ailill and Medb/betrayal of Conchobor by Fergus		
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IV.4.1 Alliance and betrayal

IV.4.1.1 *Compert Con Culainn*

As in the *Four Branches*, the motif of alliance or betrayal is present in all eight texts examined. In some of the texts, these themes are stronger than in others. In the earlier version of *Compert Con Culainn*, there is an attempted alliance between Conchobor and Lug (through Dechtine, although her pregnancy is terminated tragically), as well as an alliance with Súaltain. The theme of betrayal is absent.

IV.4.1.2 *Aided Óenfir Aífe*

Aided Óenfir Aífe displays a similarly tentative alliance of the men of Conchobor and Cú Chulainn with Connla, established just before Connla's death. This tale contains

an interesting form of betrayal, namely the betrayal of an unborn child by his father by way of imposing a *geis* on the child:

[...]luid Aífe ingen Airdgeme cuici 7 ba torrach forácaib 7 asbert fria no bérad mac. ‘Bíd ind ordnasc n-órdae so acut’, ol sé, ‘corop coimse don mac. In tan bas coimse dó, táet dom chuindchidsea i n-Ére 7 nacham berad óenfer dia chonair 7 nacha sloinded do óenfiur 7 ná fémded comlann óenfir.’⁴²⁶

The *geis* (a prohibition similar to taboo) is deliberately formulated in such a way that it proves fatal later on in the child’s life. By prohibiting the boy from identifying himself and from refusing combat, Cú Chulainn predestines the boy to die by his father’s hand.

Even when warned that the boy is his son, Cú Chulainn refuses to change the fate he imposed on his son:

Is and sin asbert Cú Chulainn: ‘Coisc, a ben! Ní cosc mná admoiniur mórgnímaib asa coscur glé. Ní gníther do banchobrae. Bam gnímbúadach. Buidig ruisc ruirech. Dé fola form chnis crú cuirp Connlai. Caín súgfet gaí in cleitine cain. Cid é no beth and, a ben,’ ol sé, ‘na ngénainnse ar inchaib Ulad.’⁴²⁷

This very same betrayal is echoed in *Tochmarc Emire*, which briefly retells how the *geis* was imposed.⁴²⁸

⁴²⁶ Van Hamel, *Compert Con Culain and other stories*, Dublin, 1968, 11.

Aífe daughter of Airdgeme went to him there, and when she left she was pregnant, and he told her that she would bear a son. “You are to keep this golden thumb ring,” he said, “until the boy can wear it. When that time comes, let him follow me to Ériu. Let him turn aside for no one, and let him identify himself to no one, and let him refuse to fight no one.” (J. Gantz, *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, 148)

⁴²⁷ Van Hamel, *CCC*, 14.

But Cú Chulaind answered, “Silence, woman!” It is not a woman’s advice I seek regarding deeds of bright splendour. Such deeds are not performed with a woman’s assistance. Let us be triumphant in feats. Sated the eyes of a great king. A mist of blood upon my skin the gore from the body of Condlæ. Beautifully spears will suck the fair javelin. Whatever were down there, woman, I would go for the sake of Ulaid.” (J. Gantz, *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, 151)

⁴²⁸ Fácbaid Cú Chulainn dornnaisc óir dó 7 asbert fria co tised dia chuindchidseom co hÉrinn in tan bad lán in dornnaisc dia mér 7 asbert combad é a ainm dobretha dó Connlæ, 7 asbert fria nacha sloinded do óenfer 7 nacha mbérad óenfer dia sligid 7 náro opad comlonn óenfir. (Van Hamel, *CCC*, 55)

Cú Chulaind left a golden finger-ring for him, and said to her that the boy was to go and seek him in Erin, so soon as the ring should fit on his finger. And he said that Conla was the name to be given him, and charged her that he should not make himself known to any one man; that he should not turn out of the way

IV.4.1.3 *Tochmarc Emire*

Tochmarc Emire is, however, primarily concerned with alliance. Cú Chulainn forms an alliance with Scáthach, who trains him in the use of weapons, including the *gáe bolga*, with which he unknowingly kills his own son in *Aided Óenfir Aífe*. At the same time, Cú Chulainn forms an alliance with Aífe (which results in the aforementioned son), and helps forge an alliance between Scáthach and Aífe, who were sworn enemies. There is an attempted alliance between Rúad and Cú Chulainn, due to Cú Chulainn saving Rúad's daughter; this is followed by a betrayal of said daughter, who travelled to Ireland to marry Cú Chulainn but was injured by Cú Chulainn himself when he failed to recognize her.

IV.4.1.4 *Mesca Ulad*

In *Mesca Ulad*, Ailill and Medb betray the trust of the Ulaid by containing them in the iron house built especially for the purpose, although the precise meaning, the exact circumstances and the full connotations of the betrayal are unclear due to the missing parts in the manuscript sources. There is, however, the alliance with Ailill at the end of the text (the fragment from the LL manuscript),⁴²⁹ and the alliance between Conchobor, Cú Chulainn and Findtan.

of any man, nor refuse combat to any. ("The wooing of Emer", Tom Peete Cross and Clark Harris Slover (eds.), *Ancient Irish Tales*, New York, 1996, 167)

⁴²⁹ Tánic dano Ailill anes fri hUlu co mbuú for céldi occo. Do-breth comlethet a enech di ór 7 argut do Ailill 7 secht cumala cach meic dia maccaib. Dolluid iarom Ailill dochum a thíri fo chóri 7 óntaid fri Ulu. (J. Carmichael Watson, *MU*, Dublin, 1941, 47)

Ailill, moreover, came north to Ulaid to visit. He was given the width of his face in gold and silver and seven cumals for each of his sons; then he returned to his own land, in peace and harmony with the Ulaid.

IV.4.1.5 *Echtra Nerai*

In *Echtra Nerai*, there is an alliance of Nera with the woman offered to him by the king of the *síd*, counterbalanced with the betrayal of the king by the woman. This alliance is somewhat similar to the alliance in *Táin Bó Fraích* described below. There seems to be a parallel between the woman in *Echtra Nerai* and the woman of Ireland in *Táin Bó Fraích*, in that neither of them belongs to the people they are living with. The possibility of betrayal and lack of alliance are obvious in the section about the blind and the lame man.⁴³⁰

IV.4.1.6 *Táin Bó Fraích*

In *Táin Bó Fraích* the theme of alliance surfaces several times: Fráech is allied with the people from the *síd* by blood, his mother being sister to Boand. There is also Fráech's alliance with Ailill and Medb on several levels: first by his union with Findabair, and again by his taking part in the cattle raid of Cúailnge. When his wife, sons and cows are stolen, Fráech forms alliance with Conall Cernach and enlists his help in

(J. Gantz, *early Irish Myths and Sagas*, 218)

⁴³⁰ Atchid assin dun immach cach dia ar a chiunn dall 7 baccach *for* a muin. *No* tegdis co m-bitis *for* ur na tibrat i *n-dorus* in duiniu. "In fil ann?" ol in doll. "Fil ecin," oll in baccach. "Tiagom ass!" ol in *baccach*. *Rofiarfacht Nero* iarum inni sin don mnai. "Cidh Tathaigit," ol se, "in dall 7 in baccach don tiprait?" "Tathuigid in m-barr fil issin tiprait," ol in *uhen*," .i. mionn n-oir his *for* cionn ind *rig*. Iss ann do-coisigar." "Cid armod in dias uccott dotathuiged?" ol Nero. "Ni *ansa*," ol si, "huair rob iat roba tairisiu lassin rig do thathaigid in bairr. Rodallad indaro *fer* 7 ro-baccad araili." (Kuno Meyer, *The Adventures of Nera*, 218) He saw every day a blind man and a lame man on his neck coming out of the *dún* before him. They would go until they were at the brink of a well before the *dún*. "Is it there?" said the blind man. "It is indeed," said the lame one. "Let us go away," said the lame man. Nera then asked the woman about this. "Why do the blind and the lame man visit the well?" "They visit the Crown, which is in the well," said the woman, "viz. a diadem of gold, which the king wears on his head. It is there it is kept." "Why do those two go?" said Nera. "Not hard to tell," said she, "because it is they that are trusted by the king to visit the crown." One of them was blinded, the other lamed. (Kuno Meyer, *The Adventures of Nera*, 219)

recovering his family and cattle,⁴³¹ and the two of them form an alliance with a woman of Ireland who helps them with advice.

IV.4.1.7 *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*

In *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*, attempted alliance is the very drive of the story: the messengers from Conchobor and from Ailill and Medb ask for the gift of the hound, promising strong friendship and many gifts in return.⁴³² The alliance never really takes place, since Mac Dathó sets the two competing kingdoms against each other. There is, however, a lesser degree of hostility towards Ulster due to the fact that the hound chooses the Ulstermen at the end and slays the men of Connacht.

IV.4.1.8 *Longes Mac n-Uislenn*

Betrayal of trust is very strongly present in *Longes Mac n-Uislenn*. In *Longes Mac n-Uislenn*, betrayal is the stronger of the two motifs and it almost in always intricately interwoven with alliance. The alliance of Derdriu and Leborcham is a minor but still an

⁴³¹ ‘Dommáirse’, ol Fráech ri Conall, ‘co ndichis lemm nach ré ó conarnecmar.’ ‘Ragatsa ém’, ol Conall Cernach. (Wolfgang Meid, *TBF*, Dublin, 1994, 17)

“Help me, then,” said Froech. “Come with me until we find them.” “I will, indeed,” said Conall. (J. Gantz, *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, 125)

⁴³² ‘Do chungid in chon do-dechammar-ni’ ol techta Connacht ‘.i. ó Ailill agus ó Meidb ; agus do-béartar tri fichit cét lilegach hi cétóir agus carpat agus da ech bas dech la Connachta, agus a chommain cinn bliadna cen- mothá sin.’ ‘Dia chungid dano do-dechammar-ni ó Chonchobur’ ol techta Ulad; ‘agus ni messa Conchobar do charait agus dano do thabairt sét agus indile, agus a chomméit cétna a túaith, agus biaid degcaratrad de.’ (Rudolf Thurneysen, *SMMD*, Dublin, 1986, 2)

“It is to ask for the hound that we have come,” said the messengers from Connachta (that is, from Ailill and Medb). “You will receive one hundred and sixty milch cows immediately, and a chariot, and the two best horses in Connachta, and as much again at the end of the year.”

“It is to ask for the hound that we have come from Conchubur,” said the messengers from Ulaid, “since he is no worse a friend for giving jewellery and cattle and everything else from the north and since a great friendship will result.” (J. Gantz, *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, 180-1)

important one, since the female satirist is the only mentor in Derdriu's childhood, bringing her up, and thus her only friend.

The alliance between Derdriu and the three sons of Uisliu is the alliance between an exiled person and three of the best warriors of the Red Branch, causing the betrayal of Conchobor by the brothers (and by his foster-daughter) by way of (emotionally) alienating and eloping with the woman the king selected to become his wife. While on the run, the sons of Uisliu ally with people all over Ireland against Conchobor, i.e. everyone who gives them shelter and support and thus opposes Conchobor.

Bátar for fõesamaib céin móir mór-thimchell n-Érenn [...] ⁴³³

This alliance, in turn, equals the betrayal of Conchobor by everyone who supports the brothers and Derdriu. Exiled to Scotland, the brothers form an alliance with the king of Scotland:

[d]o-chótar side dia ndílgiund i n-óen-ló co-ndeochar dochum rí Alban condarraigaib ina munteras ocus coro-gabsat amsaini acca ocus ro-suidigsitar a tige issind faithchi. ⁴³⁴

They are later betrayed by the king (and his servant) when the king desires Derdriu and tries to win her through the servant.

The alliance between the sons of Uisliu and Fergus, Dubthach and Cormac mac Conchobuir, formed when the Ulstermen request of Conchobor to allow the brothers to return, is broken by Conchobor's betrayal of their trust; by arranging for Fergus to be

⁴³³ Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, New York, 1949, 46.

For a great while they were under protection all around Ireland [...] (Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 64)

⁴³⁴ Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 46.

The latter went on a single day to destroy them, whereupon they proceeded to the king of Scotland, and he took them into his household following. (Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 64)

invited to ale-banquets, he effectively prevents him from fulfilling his promise of acting as a surety for the brothers and thus forces him to betray them.⁴³⁵ Fergus' son, Fiachu, however, forms a strong alliance with the brothers, taking his father's place and giving his life for Noísiu.⁴³⁶

Conchobor further deepens his betrayal of the brothers by forming an alliance with Éogan mac Durthacht, whom he entrusts with the murder of the brothers.

Is and dano tánic Eogan mac Durthacht rí Fernmaige do chórai fri Conchobor, ar ro-boí i n-essíd friss i cíana. Is é-side ro-herbad dia mmarbat ocus amsaig Conchobuir immi connatístais cuci-sium.⁴³⁷

This, in consequence, causes Fergus and Dubthacht, who are outraged at Conchobor's actions and the resulting loss of their own honour, to form an uneasy alliance⁴³⁸ with Ailill and Medb and thus betray Conchobor.

⁴³⁵ Bai immurgu imchosnam im Fergus dia churid do chormannaib a comairli Chonchobuir, ar as-bertatar maic Uislenn nadcon-istais biad i n-Hérinn acht biad Conchobuir I tossuch. Luid iarum Fiachu mac Fergusa leo ocus anaid Fergus agus Dubthacht [...] (Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 47)

With respect to Fergus, however, by the counsel of Conchobor a contention took place to invite him to ale-banquets, for the Sons of Uisliu said they would not eat [any] food in Ireland except at first the food of Conchobor. Then Fiachu mac Fergusa went with them, and Fergus and Dubthacht remained behind. (Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 65.)

⁴³⁶ Do-lluid immurgu mac Fergusa co-mbaí for leth-láim Noísen. Feraid Eogan fáilti friu la béim forgama do gai mór i n-Noísin co-rroimid a drium triit. Fo-ceird la sodain mac Fergusa co-tuc a dí láim dar Noísin co-tuc foí ocus co-tarlaic fair anúas ocus is samlaid ro-bíth noísiu tre mac Fergusa anúas. (Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 47)

The son of Fergus, however, came until he was on the side of Noisiu. Eogan welcomed them with a thrust of the great spear into Noisiu so that his back broke through it. Therewith, the son of Fergus threw himself and put both arms around Noisiu and brought him under him and cast himself down upon him, and thus it was that Noisiu was struck from above through the son of Fergus. (Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 65)

⁴³⁷ Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 47.

Then, moreover, Eogan mac Durthacht, king of Fernmag, came for peace with Conchobor, for he had been at strife with him for a long period. He it is who had been entrusted to kill them, and the mercenaries of Conchobor were about him [Conchobor] in order that they might not come to him. (Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 65)

⁴³⁸ Is ed lotar iarum co Ailill ocus co Meidb ar ro-fetatar is sí lánamain foda-róelsat ocus dano ni-bu chúl serce do Uлтаib.

Vernam Hull, *Longes mac n-Uislenn*, 48.

Thereupon they went to Ailill and Medb, for they knew that that couple would be able to support them; and for the Ulstermen, moreover, it was not a refuge (?) [sic] of love.

Vernam Hull, *Longes mac n-Uislenn*, 66.

IV.4.2 The superiority of the king/member of the royal house

IV.4.2.1 *Compert Con Culainn*

The motif of the king's superiority (or occasionally that of a member of the royal house) is present in all of the Irish tales. It is often implied by the context or present subtly in descriptions of the king's power and possessions. In *Compert Con Culainn*,⁴³⁹ Conchobor's superiority is shown in the way all of his men submit to his judgement when there is a dispute regarding who should rear the boy:

Is and sin iarom bátar Ulaid i comthinól i n-Emuin Macha in tan brethae in mac.
Bátar iarom oc imchosnam cíá díb no eblad in mac 7 lothar i m-breith
Conchobuir.⁴⁴⁰

After Conchobor suggests that Finnochóem take the boy, each of the men, convinced that he should be the person to rear the boy, presents his reasons for being given the boy.

When Morann, who is then asked to decide the matter, tells the men who the boy should be entrusted to and why, he begins by saying that he should entrust the boy to Conchobor, again expressing that Conchobor is superior to everyone. Cú Chulainn's importance is also emphasized by the choice of his numerous foster-parents and their strength, wealth and other qualities.

⁴³⁹ In the later version of the tale, Conchobar's superior social position is evident from his request for *ius primae noctis*.

⁴⁴⁰ Van Hamel, *CCC*, 6.

It was then that the men of Ulad were in an assembly at Emain Macha when the boy was brought. They were in a dispute who should rear the boy and they submitted to the judgement of Conchobor. (Translation mine.)

IV.4.2.2 *Aided Óenfir Aife*

Similarly, the superiority of the entire retinue as well as that of the king is implied in a way that can be understood either as real fear or as satire in *Aided Óenfir Aife*:

“Maith tra,” ol Conchobor, “mairg thír i táet in gillae ucut,” ol sé. “Matis fir móra na hindsí asa táet donístis, conneltis ar grian, in tan is mac bec dogní in airbert ucut. Eirged nech ara chend. Nacha telged i tír eter.”⁴⁴¹

The interpretation of these words as satire would, of course, imply the superiority of Cú Chulainn and Aife’s son.

IV.4.2.3 *Tochmarc Emire*

In *Tochmarc Emire*, Conchobor is singled out as the richest, most famous and most powerful in the descriptive paragraph at the very beginning:

Bai rí amrae aireгдаe i nEmain Macha fecht n-aill .i. Conchobur mac Fachtnai Fáthaig. [...] Bai mór d’ordan 7 d’airechus 7 d’immud isin ríghig i nEmain. [...] In am no búailed Conchobur co fleisc rígdai in stéill, contaitis Ulaíd uili fris.⁴⁴²

Cú Chulainn, however, is singled out as the best warrior and the most desirable of men.

IV.4.2.4 *Mesca Ulad*

In *Mesca Ulad*, Conchobor’s superiority over Cú Chulainn and Findtan is evident through his obtaining the rule over the Ulaíd by persuading them to give over their

⁴⁴¹ Van Hamel, *CCC*, 11-12.

“Woe, indeed,” said Conchubur, “to the land to which yonder lad comes. If the great men from his island were to arrive, they would pound us to dust, inasmuch as a mere boy performs such feats. Let someone go to meet him, and let him not enter this country.” (J. Gantz, *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, 148)

⁴⁴² Van Hamel, *CCC*, 20.

There lived once upon a time a great and famous king in Emain Macha, whose name was Conchobar, son of Fachtna. [...] In the king’s house at Emain was great state and rank and plenty. [...] Whenever Conchobar struck the gong with his royal rod, all the men of Ulster were silent. (Tom Peete Cross and Clark Harris Slover, “The Wooing of Emer”, 153)

respective thirds of the province, first for a year, and depending upon the success of that year, forever.

IV.4.2.5 *Echtra Nerai*

Echtra Nerai implies that Ailill and Medb are more powerful than the king of the síd, which they destroy. At the same time, Nera is presented as a character with a special status who can fulfil Ailill's dare (albeit with some advice from the captive), and who can move between different worlds.

IV.4.2.6 *Táin Bó Fraích*

In *Táin Bó Fraích*, the superiority of the royal house of Ailill and Medb is expressed through their daughter Findabair:

‘Ceist, in n-éláfa limm?’ ol sé. ‘Ní élub ém’, ol sí, ‘ór issam ingen ríog 7 ríona. Ní fil dot daidbrisiu náchim éta óm muntir, 7 bid hé mo thogasa dano dul chucutsu. Is tú ro charus...’⁴⁴³

With these words, Findabair has in effect told Fráech that elopement is inappropriate for her because of her social status and bloodline. Ailill and Medb later reinforce that message when they discuss the possibility of their daughter eloping with Fróech and the consequences of such action.

⁴⁴³ Wolfgang Meid, *TBF*, 6.

"Will you come away with me?" asked Fróech. "Indeed, I will not," she replied, "for I am the daughter of a king and queen. You are not so poor that you cannot get me from my people, and it will be my choice to go with you, for it is you I have loved." (J. Gantz, *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, 119)

IV.4.2.7 *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*

In *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*, the tone and outcome of the story suggest that Mac Dathó is superior to Conchobor and Ailill and Medb in terms of cunningness, which is shown by both parties striving to secure the hound and Mac Dathó's alliance, and in the final scenes of humiliation of both competing royal houses.

IV.4.2.8 *Longes Mac n-Uislenn*

In *Longes Mac n-Uislenn*, Conchobor's superiority is again shown through circumstances: what the king wants, he must get, regardless of the consequences. In this particular tale, the consequences of such superiority are positively devastating: the deaths of innumerable heroes, Derdriu's suicide, the slaying of the maidens of Emain Macha, and the exile of thousands of the Ulaid.

IV.4.3 Parting

Parting as a motif is present in several ways, such as the parting of lovers, of family members, parting from the fatherland (exile), from possessions such as cattle, a hound or land, as well as death as the ultimate form of separation.

IV.4.3.1 *Compert Con Culainn*

In *Compert Con Culainn*, Deichtine is separated from her child twice: first from her foster child, who dies after an illness, and later from the unborn child when she crushes it within her because she is embarrassed to be pregnant by a man other than her husband.⁴⁴⁴

IV.4.3.2 *Aided Óenfir Aife*

In *Aided Óenfir Aife*, Cú Chulainn willingly parts with his unborn child; this motif resurfaces as final separation with Connla's death, and resurfaces in *Tochmarc Émire*.

IV.4.3.3 *Tochmarc Émire*

Tochmarc Émire contains the parting of lovers: Forgall attempts to separate Cú Chulainn and Emer in several ways. After sending Cú Chulainn away in the hope that he will never return, he even attempts to give Emer to another man to prevent the union between her and Cú Chulainn.

⁴⁴⁴ In the later version of the story, there is only the separation of Deichtine and Conchobar through her elopement.

IV.4.3.4 *Mesca Ulad*

Parting with one's territory occurs in *Mesca Ulad*, where Cú Chulainn and Findtan, after being asked, choose to part with their respective shares of the province for the benefit of Ulster and Conchobor.

IV.4.3.5 *Echtra Nerai*

Echtra Nerai contains the separation of lovers, Nera parts with the woman from the *síd* on several occasions when he has to leave the *síd* to warn his people.

IV.4.3.6 *Táin Bó Fraích*

In *Táin Bó Fraích*, Fráech parts with his mother, which is emphasized by the mourning scene, and is separated (through rather mysterious circumstances possibly due to the corruption of the text) from his wife, his three sons, and his cows.

IV.4.3.7 *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*

Separation from material goods occurs in *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*, where Mac Dathó is asked to part with his hound and give it to Conchobor or to Ailill and Medb.

IV.4.3.8 *Longes Mac n-Uislenn*

A more exaggerated separation of a child from her parents, and also from all human beings except for a foster-mother, is evident in *Longes Mac n-Uislenn* when Conchobor decides to bring Derdriu up in complete isolation. Parting with the territory (Ulster) is also present; first the sons of Uisliu, and later Fergus and three thousand men are exiled. *Longes Mac n-Uislenn* also contains the separation or parting of the lovers Derdriu and Noísiu, achieved through Noísiu's death.

IV.5 Plot line analysis of individual narratives

I propose to examine the plot, and through that the structure of the texts selected for this research project, by means of an analysis of the plot lines. I propose to do this by a graphic representation of motifs (bound and free) that occur in each story, taking into account that traditionally, the plot line is generally divided into the following elements, in this order:

- Exposition,
- Rise in action,
- Climax,
- Fall in action,
- Dénouement/resolution.⁴⁴⁵

The plot line also contains an inciting moment of some sort, which prepares the ground for the rise in action; a significant amount of elaboration, such as descriptions, details, reasons, discussion of major points; possibly an emphatic ending, to finish in a particularly memorable way. All these elements contribute to the narration by slowing it down or accelerating it. It has to be remembered that plot line does not equal time line; while one might expect medieval stories to be rather straightforward and linear, they might not necessarily follow such a pattern.

I propose to utilize reader response approach⁴⁴⁶ to produce a plot line graph for each text and to analyse the resulting structures. Reader response centres on the reader

⁴⁴⁵ See Chapter III, Freytag's Pyramid Structure, for a more detailed explanation.

and the reader's subjective response to the text as opposed to an objective interpretation of the text. It refuses to see a literary work as an object, with a distance imposed between the text and the reader, but proposes the reader's active involvement in the reading and processing the text. It views literature as an act of performance, as something that only exists when it is read, as something that has no single correct meaning.

Contrary to the formalist approach, which argues that the only correct interpretation and value of the text is in the author's mind, reader response claims that the text contains special meaning and value for the reader based on the reader's experience. The interpretation of text is subjective. Reader response emphasizes the meaning which the reader extracts from the text. It recognizes three streams: individualist (which proposes that a text is experienced differently by each and every reader, based on each individual reader's background, experience, and belief), experimental and uniformist (which proposes that the text determines the reader's experience of it, with techniques used to achieve a certain effect; consequently, all readers experience the text in the same way).

I propose to utilize the uniformist approach, which assumes a fairly uniform response by all readers, unlike the individualist approach, which emphasizes individual

⁴⁴⁶ For more details, see: Stanley Fish *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, Cambridge, Mass., and London, England, 1980, especially pp. 21-67; Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: a Theory of Aesthetic Response*, Baltimore, 1978; Robert C. Holub, *Reception Theory: a Critical Introduction*, London and New York, 1984; Elizabeth Freund, *The Return of the Reader: Reader Response Criticism*, London and New York, 1987; Jane P. Tompkins (ed.), *Reader Response Criticism: from Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, Baltimore and London, 1980, especially chapters by Jane P. Tompkins, "An Introduction to Reader-Response Criticism" on pp. ix-xxvi, Gerald Prince, "Introduction to the Study of Narrative" on pp. 7-25, Wolfgang Iser, "The Reading Process: a Phenomenological Approach" on pp. 50-69, Stanley Fish, "Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics" on pp. 70-100, and David Bleich, "Epistemological Assumptions in the Study of Response", on pp. 134-63.

reader's experience. The writer puts control in the text by means of narrative devices, stylistics, and structures that prompt a certain response in the implied reader.⁴⁴⁷ I also propose to use the archival approach, which is based on gathering a sample of texts and analyzing them regarding basic elements of the plot as described above, combined with a text-interpretative approach based on literary theory.

The plot line is analysed by means of ascribing tension value to each of the most significant events that occur in the tale, namely those events that are seen as the ones that carry the story. The tension is valued on the scale of one to ten, for lack of a better, less arbitrary way of portraying it on computerized graphs. The beginning value of one signifies the basic level at which an episode must be in order to exist; this value signifies events without any particular tension that are necessary for the tale because of their function. Such events tend to occur at the very beginning of a story or episode and represent the exposition; they are just the introduction that precedes an event that produces more tension. Sometimes, they are the final unravelling of the situation after a high-tension event.

The top value of ten is ascribed to the events or situations that produce high tension in the reader; they can be very sudden, or tension can build up over a number of subsequent smaller events. Between the extreme values of one and ten representing extremely low and extremely high tension respectively, other values progress steadily

⁴⁴⁷ I. e. the reader assumed by the author.

depending on how the events they describe affect the reader. Generally, events rated on the scale between one and three are low-tension events; the values between four and seven are medium-tension events, with the values of four and five being at the lower end of the spectrum of medium tension and the values between six and seven being at the higher end of the spectrum of medium tension. Events that signify action or change in the course of the narrative increase the tension value of the graph; the more radical the action or change, the higher the value shown on the graph. The events do not necessarily progress or regress by a single unit of value; life-changing events, or extreme inaction can progress or regress in multiple units.

All events are dependent for their rating on the graph on the events that directly precede them. Static events do not produce a change in tension; a large number of such events following each other closely results in a horizontal line, or sometimes in a fall in tension. Predictability and expectability play a minor role, as unpredictable and unexpected events produce a higher rise in tension. It has to be noted that different readers may produce somewhat different graphs based on the differences in levels of tension they ascribe to certain events. The graph method tends to be rather subjective in minute details, since it depends on reader response and is based on numerous close readings of texts. Climaxes and pits, as well as general rising and falling of the action, however, should not vary too greatly from reader to reader.

Different motifs are marked alphabetically on the horizontal axis (starting with A and continuing to Z in alphabetic order, after which point combinations of AA-AZ, BB-

BZ etc. are used to mark further motifs). Different tension values are marked on the vertical axis with number values of one to ten. Each graph is followed by an explanation of the marks of the events on the vertical axis, and by an analysis of how the story is subdivided into episodes.

IV.5.1 The structure of the *Four Branches*

The structure of the Four Branches is a problematic issue; Sioned Davies emphasises that all the stories of the *Mabinogion* in their present form, the *Four Branches* included, were literary creations, not the result of the writing down of oral tales.⁴⁴⁸ In an earlier study,⁴⁴⁹ however, Davies speculates that

it would seem that the tales, or parts of them, were transmitted orally for centuries before they were safeguarded in manuscript form.⁴⁵⁰

She draws attention to the presence of ‘titles’ that tend to conclude the Welsh texts, and discusses on the possibility of the existence of further branches:

[n]id oes rheswm ychwaith dros honni mai pedair cainc yn unig oedd yma’n wreiddiol [...] ⁴⁵¹

She notes that the Welsh tradition tends towards triadic grouping, and points out that

mae’r cyfeiriad at *Mabinogi Mynweir a Mynord* ar ddiwedd y drydedd chwedl yn awgrymu mai mabinogi annibynnol ydoedd.⁴⁵²

Therefore, there may indeed have been more branches, which did not survive in written form, or were not transformed from snippets of oral or traditional material into written texts as the now existent ones were, and that it is not necessary that they were all part of a more extensive unified collection.

⁴⁴⁸ Sioned Davies, *Crefft*, 42.

⁴⁴⁹ Sioned Davies, *The Four Branches of the Mabinogi*, Llandysul, 1993.

⁴⁵⁰ See Sioned Davies, *The Four Branches*, 9.

⁴⁵¹ Sioned Davies, *Crefft*, 46; *The Four Branches*, 13.

There is no reason to assume that there were only four branches originally. (Translation mine.)

⁴⁵² Sioned Davies, *Crefft*, 46; *The Four Branches*, 13.

The reference to ‘Mabinogi of the Collar and the Hammer’ at the end of the Third Branch suggests that this was an independent tale. (Translation mine.)

The very fact that the existent branches, in their present form, seem to be such deliberate literary compositions speckled with so many elements pertaining to the oral tradition speaks, to my mind, in favour of the possibility of the existence of multiple different texts, possibly belonging to their own literary cycles, that were united into a whole by a deliberate attempt at creating a coherent unit, by a careful and skilled redactor-scribe. The meticulously organized structure suggests a deliberate attempt to create early written examples of Welsh prose.

Do the tales show enough evidence of oral tradition for us to believe that they were once part of it? Davies quotes Middleton to say that even those written forms that were intended to be for public, i. e. oral performance, can show in their character the possibility for improvisation. Improvisation, of course, would have been part of an oral performance. There is no proof or definite indication of the length of an oral performance, which may indeed have varied from situation to situation; this argument supports the argument for improvisation and variations within any given tale, since the *cyfarwydd* would have had to estimate how much time he can fill by extending a story with additions, onomastic tales, verse, or how much time he can save by cutting out episodes, onomastic tales, verse and similar elements to make the story fit a shorter performance slot he may have been given.

Ford suggests that inconsistencies, along with the episodic character of the tales, reveal a substructure that speaks of the great age of the tales that could not be completely altered or disguised by the redactor's work and effort put into giving them an elaborate

superstructure.⁴⁵³ H. L. Tristram also views the *Four Branches* as a first (and failed) attempt at integration.⁴⁵⁴ Tristram may not be entirely justified when she characterizes the attempt as a failure, for I believe that the *Four Branches* display a successful integration of episodes into relatively coherent texts, and into a fairly unified (if somewhat forced) collection of tales.

A closer look at the structure of the *Four Branches* as shown here supports the premise that they were created as literary texts: the structure is far too symmetrical and organized to be the result of a purely oral tradition. While the expression bears several traits of oral tradition, such as rhetoric, repetition, fondness for beginning a sentence with a conjunction, it would seem that those traits were merely remnants of the oral tradition with which the author must have been familiar. Perhaps he even contributed to it if he was one of the *cyfarwyddiaid* himself; however, it seems unlikely that the *Mabinogi* would have been part of his oral repertoire. Their structure points more towards a well-planned literary creation. The structure of an oral tale tends to be much more coincidental and ‘disorganized’, less symmetric.

Davies discusses the episodic structure of the *Four Branches* and divides each branch into episodes,⁴⁵⁵ which do not necessarily exactly correspond to the episodes yielded by my plot line analysis. It has to be noted that in *Crefft y Cyfarwydd*, Davies divides both *Branwen* and *Manawydan* into three episodes, while in her study *Pedeir*

⁴⁵³ Patrick K. Ford, *The Mabinogi and Other Medieval Welsh Tales*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, London, 1977, 14.

⁴⁵⁴ See Sioned Davies, *Crefft*, 48.

⁴⁵⁵ Sioned Davies, *Crefft*, 53 ff.

Keinc y Mabinogi, they are described as having two episodes each. The structure of both of these branches, especially *Branwen*, shows problems related to the structure, and definite attempts on the part of the author to establish a connection between the two tales. In the following chart, I attempt to show Sioned Davies's episodic division.⁴⁵⁶

	Sioned Davies, <i>Crefft y Cyfarwydd</i> , 53-9	Sioned Davies, <i>Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi</i> , 19
<i>Pwyll</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hanes Pwyll ac Arawn ▪ Pwyll yn priodi Rhiannon ▪ Diflaniad Pryderi 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hanes Pwyll ac Arawn ▪ Pwyll yn priodi Rhiannon ▪ Pryderi – diflannu a dychwelyd
<i>Branwen</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Uniad Matholwech a Branwen ▪ Dial palfawd Branwen ▪ “Y gwyr a gychwynwys o Iwerddon’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Matholwech yng Nghymru ▪ Trafferth yn Iwerddon; dychwelyd â phen Brân
<i>Manawydan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manawydan yn priodi Rhiannon ▪ Hud ar Ddyfed ▪ Gwared ar hud 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hanes y pedwar cyfaill ▪ Hanes Manawydan a Chigfa
<i>Math</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brad a chosb Gwydion a Gilfaethwy ▪ Tair Tynged Aranhod 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brad a chosb Gwydion a Gilfaethwy ▪ Tri thynged Aranhod

⁴⁵⁶ Sioned Davies, *Crefft*, 53-9; *Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi*, 19.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brad Blodeuwedd 	<p>[sic]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Brad Blodeuwedd
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The following table gives the division of tales into episodes as a result of the plot line analysis detailed and explained with graphs presented later on in this chapter:

<i>Pwyll</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pwyll in Annwfn ▪ Courting and early marriage to Rhiannon ▪ Progeny problem
<i>Branwen</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Branwen in Wales ▪ Branwen in Ireland ▪ ‘Tag’
<i>Manawydan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ‘Link’ ▪ Manawydan’s losses ▪ Restoration of Manawydan’s losses
<i>Math</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The rape of the footmaiden ▪ Llew’s upbringing ▪ Manhood/betrayal of Llew

It is notable that the episodes of the First and Fourth Branches correspond very closely with Davies’ division, while the episodes of the Second and Third Branches do not. Interestingly enough, several of the episodes can be further divided into three sub-episodes, as I demonstrate later.

Ian Hughes⁴⁵⁷ also divides all four texts into three episodes each:

<i>Pwyll</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Pwyll's stay in Annwfn▪ Wooing▪ The birth of Pwyll's son
<i>Branwen</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The wedding of Matholwch and Branwen and the insults▪ Matholwch and Branwen return to Ireland▪ The exile of the seven survivors
<i>Manawydan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Manawydan becomes Pryderi's stepfather and Rhiannon's husband▪ The disappearance of land▪ The disappearance of Pryderi and Rhiannon
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Gilfaethwy and Gwydion; desire for Goewin

⁴⁵⁷ Ian Hughes, "Die drei Zweige", 121-131. (Translation into English mine.)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gwydion's upbringing of Lleu ▪ Blodeuedd and her love affair with Gronw
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Hughes concludes that

[b]eim Vergleich des Inhalts, der Atmosphäre, der Stimmungen und Charakteristike aller vier Texte ist meines Erachtens nur eine einzige Schlußfolgerung möglich – wir haben es mit mehr als nur einem ursprünglichen Verfasser zu tun. Das schließt aber nicht aus, daß es einen einzelnen Schlußredaktor gegeben hat.⁴⁵⁸

What is interesting is that both Hughes and Davies⁴⁵⁹ argue that all four texts have a tripartite structure; Jeffrey Gantz⁴⁶⁰ noted the tripartite structure in *Pwyll* and *Math*. The same conclusion was reached by Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan and R. M. Jones regarding all four texts. Elizabeth Hanson-Smith⁴⁶¹ arrives at the same conclusion about *Pwyll*. She also subdivides the episodes of *Pwyll* into two segments each:⁴⁶²

⁴⁵⁸ Ian Hughes, "Die drei Zweige", 130-1.

By a comparison of the contents, the atmosphere, the moods of all four texts, there is in my opinion only one possible conclusion – we are dealing with more than one original author. That, however, does not exclude a single final redactor. (Translation mine.)

⁴⁵⁹ Taking *Crefft y Cyfarwyd*, which is later, as Davies' definitive conclusion.

⁴⁶⁰ J. Gantz, "Thematic structure in the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*", *Medium Aevum* 47, 247-54.

⁴⁶¹ Elizabeth Hanson-Smith, "Pwyll Prince of Dyfed: the narrative structure", *Studia Celtica* XVI/XVII, 126-35.

⁴⁶² Elizabeth Hanson-Smith, "Pwyll", 133.

Part One – the young prince	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dyfed before Arawn’s coming ▪ Restoration to Dyfed
Part Two – the courtship of Rhiannon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Test at the mound ▪ Test by Gwawl
Part Three – the mature king	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Barrenness of the royal couple ▪ Restoration of Pryderi

She further subdivides the sub-episodes of Part Two into two parts each:

Test at the mound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pwyll unmarried ▪ Betrothal to Rhiannon
Test by Gwawl	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Heyfedd’s [<i>sic</i>]court ▪ Marriage to Rhiannon

This demonstrates that while different scholars agree that the texts consist of different episodes, the number of episodes may differ depending on the reader.

In the following graphic representations, I attempt to present my perception of the plot line and the resulting episodic division.

IV.5.1.1 *Pwyll*

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Mark on the horizontal axis	Event
A Exposition	Pwyll is lord over seven cantrefs of Dyfed. He decides to go hunting and goes to Glyn Cuch.
B	The hunt begins.
C Inciting moment	Pwyll sees a clearing and the other pack of dogs. The stag is killed. Pwyll neglects to notice the otherworldly signs.
D	Pwyll drives the other pack away and feeds his own pack on the stag.
E	Dialogue between Pwyll and the rider who owns the pack.
F Climax 1	The rider promises to bring shame upon Pwyll to the value of a hundred stags.
G	The rider introduces himself as Arawn, king of Annwfn. Pwyll asks to redeem Arawn's friendship. Arawn sets out his conditions.
H	Pwyll reigns in Annwfn in place of Arawn in his shape and with his face so no one realises he is not Arawn.
I	Pwyll turns his back on the queen in bed. His reign continues in the same manner for a year.
J	The night of the meeting comes.
K	Pwyll meets with the king making a claim against Arawn's land. The conditions of the fight are outlined.

L	The first attack happens. The man in Arawn's place deals Hafgan the fatal blow.
M Climax 2	He is asked to deal Hafgan another blow to finish him off. He refuses.
N	Hafgan's noblemen acknowledge the superiority of the man who is in Arawn's place; he receives their allegiance.
O	Pwyll makes for the place where he is supposed to meet Arawn.
P	Arawn acknowledges Pwyll's deeds and returns his proper form and features to him. They go to their respective kingdoms.
Q	Arawn converses with his wife in bed and makes love to her.
R Climax 3	She challenges him on his behaviour in the past year.
S	Arawn realizes what a loyal, steadfast and secure friend he has in Pwyll.
T	Back in his realm, Pwyll inquires of his noblemen how he had ruled the land during the last year. He explains to them what happened.
U Dénouement	The friendship of Pwyll and Arawn. Pwyll is called Pwyll Pen Annwfn.
V Exposition	Pwyll is at Arberth with his retinue, feasting. He makes for the top of Gorsedd Arberth and is told about its properties.
W Inciting moment	Pwyll decides to sit on Gorsedd Arberth.

X	A rider is seen from the top of the mound. Pwyll wants to find out who the rider is.
Y	The first pursuit of the rider, by a member of the court on foot.
Z	The second pursuit of the rider, this time on the fastest horse in the realm known to that member of the court.
AA	The third pursuit of the rider, by a young lad on horseback. Again, the horse is the fastest in the field.
AB	Pwyll realizes it is useless for anyone but himself to pursue the rider. He pursues the rider on horse, but cannot catch her.
AC	Pwyll calls out to the rider to wait for him. He notices the attractiveness of the lady.
AD Climax 1	Dialogue between Pwyll and Rhiannon; she discloses her love for him.
AE	Pwyll and Rhiannon arrange to meet in a year's time at her father's court.
AF	They part; Pwyll spends a year waiting and never talks about the maiden to anyone.
AG	Pwyll gets ready, with 99 horsemen, and makes for the court of Hyfaidd Hen.
AH	A feast is prepared and they sit and converse.
AI	An unknown lad with auburn hair enters and greets Pwyll, saying he has a request.
AJ	Pwyll grants him whatever he wants without hearing the request first.

AK	Rhiannon objects to Pwyll's cheerful and misplaced generosity. The lad reminds her that Pwyll has given his word, in the presence of noblemen.
AL Climax 2	He asks for Rhiannon; Pwyll is silent.
AM	Rhiannon explains who the lad is and warns Pwyll that he should give her to him to avoid disgrace. Pwyll replies he cannot, upon which she advises him how to win her back.
AN	Gwawl reminds Pwyll of his request. Rhiannon instructs Gwawl to come back in a year's time so a new feast may be prepared.
AO	Gwawl returns to his realm, Pwyll returns to Dyfed.
AP	Gwawl arrives at the court of Hyfaidd Hen for the feast. Pwyll arrives and goes to the orchard and changes into rags.
AQ	Pwyll (unrecognizable in his rags) enters the hall and greets Gwawl. Pwyll says he has a request, Gwawl replies he would grant his request as long as it is reasonable.
AR	Pwyll makes his request (namely to fill his bag with food); Gwawl grants it.
AS	The bag appears bottomless; Gwawl asks if it would ever be full. Pwyll gives the trick-reply; Rhiannon urges Gwawl to stand in the bag.
AT Climax 3	Gwawl does so and is caught in the bag, his retinue is disarmed and tied; the Badger in the Bag is played.
AU	Gwawl says such a death is not fit for him. Rhiannon, on Pwyll's

	request, gives advice on how to go about setting Gwawl free.
AV	Rhiannon's advice is accepted by all. Gwawl is set free. Guarantors are listed and stand bail. Gwawl departs.
AW	The feast continues, everybody receives gifts and is satisfied according to their requests.
AX	Pwyll and Rhiannon set off together for Dyfed.
AY Dénouement	Pwyll and Rhiannon rule over Dyfed successfully for two years.
AZ Exposition; inciting moment.	The noblemen of Dyfed begin to worry about the lack of heir; they meet with Pwyll in Preseli.
BA	Pwyll asks them for a year's delay. They arrange to meet again.
BB	Pwyll and Rhiannon's son is born and six women are set to watch over him.
BC Climax 1	The baby disappears while the women sleep.
BD	The six women decide on the conspiracy against Rhiannon to avoid punishment. They kill some pups and smear Rhiannon with blood. They swear that she killed her son.
BE	The women lie persistently. Pwyll, upon being asked to divorce Rhiannon, refuses to do so (since he knows her to have a child) but

	decides she should be punished according to the crime.
BF	Rhiannon, after consulting lawyers, accepts her punishment, namely to carry visitors on her back as if she were a horse. She lives with her punishment; however, not many people allow themselves to be carried by her.
BG	Teyrnon Twrf Liant is lord over Gwent Is Coed; every year, his mare foals and the foal disappears.
BH	Teyrnon decides he would keep watch to find out why foals keep disappearing every year.
BI Climax 2	A foal is born, a claw appears and Teyrnon cuts its arm off at the elbow so the foal is saved. He finds a baby that the claw dropped.
BJ	Teyrnon and his wife decide to keep the baby and bring him up as their own. They name him Gwri. The boy develops quickly.
BK	Gwri is given the foal that was saved the night he was found.
BL	Teyrnon and his wife hear about Rhiannon and her punishment. They realize Gwri must be Rhiannon's lost son and decide to return him.
BM	Teyrnon and Gwri make for Pwyll's court. Teyrnon and Gwri refuse Rhiannon's offer to carry them on her back.
BN Climax 3	The boy is restored to Pwyll and Rhiannon. The boy is renamed Pryderi after the first word Rhiannon says when she receives the news.
BO	Pwyll offers to recompense Teyrnon. Pryderi's further upbringing is decided upon. Teyrnon is offered gifts (which he refuses) and returns to his realm.

BP	Pryderi is brought up into the most handsome and accomplished lad in the kingdom.
BQ Dénouement	Pwyll dies. Pryderi continues to reign after Pwyll, conquers the seven cantrefs of Seisyllwch, and marries Cigfa daughter of Gwyn Gohoyw son of Gloyw Walltlydan.

The graph clearly shows that *Pwyll* falls into three fairly independent episodes:

- the hunt/Pwyll meets Arawn (marked in blue on the graph);
- the courting and early marriage to Rhiannon (marked in red on the graph);
- the progeny problem (marked in green on the graph).

Each of the three episodes is independent to the point where it would be entirely functional if it appeared on its own as a separate story. If an introductory formula similar to (or identical with) the one in the first episode were added to the second and third episodes, all three episodes would be completely autonomous. Each episode is completed before the next one begins, which strengthens the independence of each individual episode despite the connection between them and their interdependence on each other. The first episode is, from the point of view of content and character involvement, so independent it could be left out of the story altogether without noticeably damaging the unity or plot of the tale, especially if Pwyll's line were included in the second episode. It does, however, contribute to the overall understanding of Pwyll's character and his connection with the Otherworld. Both of these are important for the unity and coherence of the *Four Branches* as a cycle: Pwyll's character traits as presented in the first episode

are reinforced in the second episode and have a long-term impact on his and his family's future; the connection he establishes with the Otherworld is echoed in the Third and Fourth Branches, thus strengthening the unity of the cycle as a whole. The connection between the second and then third episode is stronger than that between the first and the second episode, or that between the first and the third episode.

As demonstrated by the graph, each episode is divided into three sub-episodes, which are interdependent and more closely connected to each other. Each sub-episode is still independent enough to have its own climax, which supports the premise that they may once have been created as fairly independent texts to be joined into a larger unit. The climaxes of the first episode are:

- Arawn's threat of shame to Pwyll;
- Pwyll's refusal to deal Hafgan a second blow whereby he wins the battle;
- Arawn's wife challenging Arawn on his behaviour and making him realise what an exceptionally good friend he has in Pwyll.

This last climax appears to not be fully developed in comparison with the other two climaxes, mainly because it lacks the high increase in tension that the other two possess. This is mostly due to the circumstances of the third sub-episode and partly to the comparatively short length of that particular sub-episode.

In the second episode, all three climaxes are fully developed. The three sub-episodes of the second episode are thematically more closely interconnected than the sub-

episodes in the first episode, yet independent enough to warrant a separate climax for each sub-episode. The climaxes are:

- the dialogue between Pwyll and Rhiannon in which she discloses her love for him;
- Gwawl's request at the wedding feast for Rhiannon to be given to him;
- the game of the Badger in the Bag, whereby Gwawl is tricked and Rhiannon is restored to Pwyll.

All three climaxes in the second episode bring the tension to its utmost.

The third episode also has three sub-episodes, each of which is interconnected with the other two and has a fully developed climax. The climaxes of the third episode are:

- the disappearance of the baby;
- the claw dropping the baby at Teyrnnon's stables;
- the restoration of the baby (now grown into a boy) to Pwyll and Rhiannon.

Like the other sub-episodes of *Pwyll*, they are independent to a degree, yet interconnected with each other and forming a unit.

The total number of climaxes to the tale as a whole is nine, with an absence of a definitive single climax that would function as the climax of the tale as a whole. Eight of these are fully developed, whereas one of them is somewhat lacking. All three episodes have the same number of climaxes and the text appears highly organised and almost

completely symmetrical. *Pwyll* shows a highly artistic tripartite structure, which could be further subdivided into a nine minor sub-episodes:

- How Pwyll hunted a stag,
- How Pwyll killed Hafgan,
- How Arawn rewarded Pwyll,
- How Pwyll met Rhiannon,
- How Pwyll lost Rhiannon,
- How Pwyll reclaimed Rhiannon,
- The disappearance of Pryderi,
- The childhood of Pryderi,
- The restoration of Pryderi.

This cannot be coincidental. Such a carefully put together, balanced structure is indicative of the great deal of thought and skill that must have been put into the compiling of the story.

Furthermore, the double and triple repetitions occur in a fashion which is far too organised to be coincidental:

- White colour of Arawn's dogs, and of Rhiannon's horse;
- Three appearances of Arawn;
- Three pursuits of Rhiannon;
- Two appearances of the claw;
- Two appearances of Gwawl, and two tricks to secure Rhiannon,
- Three elements of evil: Hafgan, Gwawl, claw.

All this indicates that the story as it is known today could have been a composite of lesser episodes or adventures, which were combined into a single story by a literary-minded redactor.

Each episode has its own inciting moment. The placement of inciting moments in *Pwyll* is well organised, although somewhat unusual in the case of the third episode. The inciting moments of the first and second sub-episodes appear at the end of the exposition of each sub-episode respectively. They function as catalysts for action. In the first episode, the inciting moment is the moment the pack of Otherworldly dogs appear while Pwyll is chasing the stag, with their whiteness and red ears, the significance of which Pwyll disregards completely. The inciting moment of the second episode is the moment when a member of the court tells Pwyll that Gorsedd Arberth is associated with a taboo of some sort, namely that whoever sits on top of the mound will be injured or wounded, or see something wonderful, and Pwyll declares he would be glad to see something wonderful. In the third episode, the inciting moment comes rather late on in the story, namely when Rhiannon's baby disappears by magic. The characteristic uniting the inciting moments in *Pwyll* is an element of magic. The inciting moments in *Pwyll* function as inciting moments for the three episodes; the sub-episodes as such do not contain independent inciting moments. A more general inciting moment that would function as the inciting moment of the tale as a whole is not present.

The exposition of the first episode establishes Pwyll as the central character of the tale, presenting his social status as a nobleman, namely the lord over the seven *cantref*s of Dyfed, and positioning him geographically in Glyn Cuch:

Pwyll, Penddeuic Dyuet, a oed yn arglwyd ar seith cantref Dyuet. A threigylgweith yd oed yn Arberth, prif lys idaw, a dyuot yn y uryt ac yn y uedwl uynet y hela. Sef kyueir o'y gyuoeth a uynnei y hela, Glynn Cuch.⁴⁶³

This is a very thorough and formulaic exposition that does not require any pre-existing knowledge on the part of the reader, and as such it makes for an entirely satisfactory exposition to the tale as a whole. It uses two formulae, one of them often found in the Welsh texts of the period (X [son of Y] was Z), and the other one being a generic formula commonly used in fairy tales (once upon a time...). The exposition of the second episode is shorter, less thorough and presupposes some prior knowledge on the part of the reader regarding Pwyll's social position. In the third episode, the exposition is even shorter and relies on the previous episodes for any background information about Pwyll.

The dénouement of the first episode is very thorough and provides a complete resolution to it, giving the reader a glimpse of the future friendship between Pwyll and Arawn and providing an explanation for Pwyll's new name. The dénouement of the second episode is quicker, shorter, and more connected with the exposition of the episode that follows. The dénouement of the final episode is the most complete of all three, giving information about Pryderi's upbringing, development, choice of marriage partner and reign after the death of his father, Pwyll:

⁴⁶³ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 1.

Pwyll, prince of Dyfed, was lord over the seven cantrefs of Dyfed. Once upon a time he was at Arberth, one of his chief courts, and it came into his head and his heart to go hunting. The part of his realm he wanted to hunt was Glyn Cuch. (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 3)

Yna y trigyssant wynteu ar eu kyuoeth, ac y magwyt Pryderi uab Pwyll Pen Annwn yn amgeledus, ual yd oed dylyet, yny oed delediwhaf gwass, a theccaf, a chwpplaf o pob camp da, o'r a oed yn y dyrnas. Uelly y treulyssant blwydyn a blwydyned, yny doeth teruyn ar hoedyl Pwyll Penn Annwn, ac y bu uarw. Ac y gwledychwys ynteu Pryderi seith cantref Dyuet, yn llwydannus garedic gan y gyuoeth, a chan pawb yn y gylch. Ac yn ol hynny y kynydwyys trychantref Ystrad Tywi a phedwar cantref Keredigyawn. Ac y gelwir y rei hynny, seith cantref Seisyllwch. Ac ar y kynnyd hwnnw y bu ef, Pryderi uab Pwyll Penn Annwn, yny doeth yn y uryt wreika. Sef gwreic a uynnawd, Kicua, uerch Wynn Gohoyw, uab Gloyw Walltlydan, uab Cassnar Wledic o dyledogyon yr ynys hon. Ac yuelly y teruyna y geing hon yma o'r Mabyinnogyon.⁴⁶⁴

The thoroughness of this dénouement signals to the reader that the tale is now complete and at its end. Its last sentence, the formula "Ac yuelly y teruyna y geing hon yma o'r Mabyinnogyon" has an important role. It establishes the text as part of a larger cycle, and signals that the narrative has come to its end.

⁴⁶⁴ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 27.

They stayed in their own realm after that, and Pryderi son of Pwyll Pen Annwn was brought up carefully, as was proper, until he was the most handsome lad, and the fairest and the most accomplished at every worthy feat in the kingdom. And so years and years passed, until Pwyll Pen Annwn's life came to an end, and he died. And Pryderi ruled the seven cantrefs of Dyfed successfully, beloved by his realm and all those around him. After that he conquered the three cantrefs of Ystrad Tywi and the four cantrefs of Ceredigion, and these are called the seven cantrefs of Seisyllwch. Pryderi son of Pwyll Pen Annwn was occupied with that conquest until he decided to take a wife. The wife he wanted was Cigfa daughter of Gwyn Gohoyw, son of Gloyw Walltlydan, son of Casnar Wledig, noblemen of this island. And so ends this branch of the Mabinogion. (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 21)

IV.5.1.2 *Branwen*

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Mark	Event
A Exposition	Bendigeidfran son of Llŷr is crowned king over the Island and exalted with the crown of London. He is sitting on the rock of Harlech with his brothers. They see thirteen ships coming from the South of Ireland. Bendigeidfran sends his men to investigate.
B Inciting moment	The men learn that the ships belong to Matholwch, who would like to come on shore because he has a request: Branwen's hand in marriage.
C	Counsel is taken and it is agreed that Branwen will marry Matholwch. A feast is held to celebrate.
D	Efnysien discovers that Branwen has been given to Matholwch and is insulted and dissatisfied with the news because his opinion was not asked.
E Climax	Efnysien mutilates the horses.
F	Matholwch is informed of the events and feels insulted. He takes counsel and makes for his ships.
G	Bendigeidfran hears about that and sends messengers to enquire what is wrong. Matholwch complains to the messengers. Bendigeidfran offers silver and gold in atonement. It is accepted. Another feast is arranged and Matholwch is gloomy at it. Bendigeidfran offers another

	gift, a cauldron with magical properties of rebirth. The men journey to Talebolion.
H	Matholwch inquires about the history of the cauldron. Bendigeidfran tells that he was given the cauldron by Llasar Llaes Gyfnewid and his wife when they escaped from the iron house in Ireland.
I	Matholwch tells the story of the cauldron before it came to Bendigeidfran, after he met a man and his wife while hunting at the Lake of the Cauldron. The man and his wife were with Matholwch and his people did not object to them for the first year. Four months into the second year of their stay, the man and his wife started harassing and tormenting Matholwch's people, who asked him to choose between the pair and his kingdom. The man and his wife refused to go of their own free will; because of their fighting skills, they did not have to go against their will.
J Climax 2	An iron chamber was built, with charcoal piled around it, and the man, his wife and their children were served food and drink until they were drunk. Matholwch's smiths set the charcoal on fire until the house was white-hot. They broke out of the house and escaped.
K	Bendigeidfran tells Matholwch that they came to him after that and gave him the cauldron. They are now dispersed through his land, strengthening it with their fighting skills and excellent weapons.
L	The feast continues and when it finishes, Matholwch takes Branwen to Ireland.

M Dénouement	They are heartily welcomed in Ireland; Branwen gains great renown and friendship and they reign successfully for a year.
N Exposition	During their first year of reign, Branwen conceives and bears Matholwch a son named Gwern. The boy is put to fosterage.
O Inciting moment	Dissatisfaction over the insult that Matholwch suffered prevails in Ireland.
P	Matholwch's foster brothers taunt him and demand that he avenge the disgrace.
Q Climax 1	As a form of punishment and revenge on Wales, Branwen is driven from Matholwch's chamber, put to work in the kitchen, and is abused by the butcher. A ban is set on ships from Wales so no one can find out about Branwen's disgrace and punishment.
R	The punishment continues for three years. Branwen rears a starling in the kitchen, teaching it words and telling it about Bendigeidfran.
S	Branwen sends the starling to Wales with a letter tied on its wing. The bird finds Bendigeidfran and the letter is discovered and read.
T	Aggrieved to hear about Branwen's punishment, Bendigeidfran begins to muster his troops. It is decided that Bendigeidfran should leave seven men to rule the Island while the host goes to Ireland. Bendigeidfran sails to Ireland.
U	Swineherds sight the fleet on the sea and come to Matholwch. Matholwch is told about the forest on the sea, but does not know what

	it means. Branwen explains that it is her brother coming to redress the insult. The Irishmen decide they should retreat across the Llinon and pull down the bridge.
V	Bendigeidfran acts as a bridge for his troops. Matholwch offers to invest Gwern and give him the kingship of Ireland. The Irish offer to build a house in his honour to make peace. Bendigeidfran accepts (on Branwen's advice).
W	A truce is made, the Irishmen build a house, but they are planning a ruse. They build a house with a hundred pillars, with a bag on each pillar and an armed warrior in each bag. Efnysien comes and notices the bags; he enquires what is in the first bag.
X Climax 2	Undeceived by the lies with which the Irishman answers his questions, Efnysien squashes the brains out of all the Irishmen hidden in the bags.
Y	Both hosts enter the house and a truce is made; Gwern is invested.
Z	Peace is established and Gwern goes from man to man, making friends with them.
AA	Efnysien requests that the boy go to him, too.
AB Climax 3	Efnysien throws Gwern into the fire.
AC	Bendigeidfran prevents Branwen from jumping into the fire after the boy, and shields her while fighting takes place.
AD	The Irish begin to kindle fire under the cauldron of rebirth and throw in

	the dead bodies of their warriors. Efnysien creeps in among the dead bodies and allows himself to be thrown into the cauldron. He bursts the cauldron of rebirth and thus facilitates a Pyrrhic victory for the Welsh.
AE	Bendigeidfran is wounded and only seven men escape. Bendigeidfran commands his head to be struck off and buried on the Gwynfryn in London looking towards France. The men are instructed to feast beforehand in Harlech for seven years with the head, and to spend 80 years in Gwales without opening the door towards Aber Henfelen.
AF	Branwen dies of a broken heart and is buried.
AG Dénouement	The men journey to Harlech and discover that Caswallon has usurped Bendigeidfran's land.
AH Exposition	The men spend seven years at Harlech. The birds of Rhiannon sing to them. After seven years, they make for Gwales. They spend eighty years feasting without sorrow.
AI Inciting moment	Heilyn son of Gwyn opens the door towards Aber Henfelen. The men suddenly feel every loss, sorrow, or ill they have ever suffered.
AJ	They make for London to bury the head. No oppression is to come across the sea while the head is in its hiding place.
AK Insufficiently developed	Meanwhile in Ireland, no one is left alive except for five pregnant women, who bear five sons and sleep with them. The sons rule the country and divide it into five. They search for precious metals and

climax	grow wealthy.
AL Dénouement	Recap: this branch tells of the Blow to Branwen, the Assembly of Brân, the Feasting in Harlech, the Birds of Rhiannon and the Assembly of the Head.

Like *Pwyll*, *Branwen* is divided into three episodes, yet they are significantly different from the episodes of *Pwyll*. The division of episodes into sub-episodes is less symmetrical and less balanced. Looking at the graph, it is also easy to see why Sioned Davies' early work divides *Branwen* into two episodes and her later work into three. While the first two episodes are structurally strong and independent enough to present themselves as fairly independent units, the third episode is structurally inferior and easy to mistake for just another part of the second episode.

The three episodes of *Branwen* as presented on the graph are:

- Branwen in Wales (marked in blue);
- Branwen in Ireland (marked in red);
- Aftermath (marked in green).

The first and second episodes are fairly independent and could function more or less satisfactorily on their own. The third episode, however, is not really independent or developed enough to stand on its own without the second episode. What prevents them from merging successfully into a single episode is the fact that the second episode on its own is complete in itself and does not need the third episode as its dénouement. In the

third episode, there is also too much ‘retelling’ of the events from the second episode to allow a successful cohesion of the two into a single episode.

With the exception of the third episode, the episodes of *Branwen* are subdivided into sub-episodes. The first episode contains two sub-episodes:

- the wooing of Branwen;
- the tale of the cauldron of rebirth.

The sub-episodes of the first episode do not strictly depend on each other for their existence. The second sub-episode is actually an embedded tale, but because the text preceding it is practically complete in itself, both of them function as sub-episodes.

Branwen is the only narrative in the *Four Branches* that contains more than one embedded tale. (*Math* contains a short embedded tale.) In *Branwen*, there is one embedded tale in the first episode and one in the third episode; both are thematically connected with the Irish. The embedded tale in the first episode is successful to a degree, in terms of fitting into the tale as a whole and in terms of sub-episodic independence. However, the one in the third episode appears to be less so, primarily because the third episode itself is not developed to its full potential, and the connection between the episode and the embedded tale is rather arbitrary.

The second episode of *Branwen* contains three sub-episodes:

- the dissatisfaction in Ireland;
- Efnysien's revenge over the Irish;

- the aftermath, or the tragic loss sustained by the Welsh.

These three sub-episodes are closely interconnected, especially the second and the third ones, which depend on each other for their functionality.

The third episode is, to a modern audience, a rather self-contained unit with no sub-episodes. It appears to be rather short and underdeveloped, describing the aftermath of the events of the second episode. It contains an equally underdeveloped embedded tale concerning the five pregnant women of Ireland. This embedded tale is less successful despite, or perhaps because of, its tentative connection with the rest of the story. It lacks proper development and is shorter, compared to the other two episodes and their component parts. This entire sub-episode seems to lack complete development, as well as a proper climax.

Each sub-episode of *Branwen* has its own climax: there are two climaxes in the first episode, three in the second, and a single inferior undeveloped climax in the third episode. The climaxes of the first episode are:

- the mutilation of the horses;
- the iron chamber and escape.

The first climax is fully developed, while the second climax lacks slightly in terms of tension, presenting on the graph a climax that is slightly weaker than the previous one.

The climaxes of the second episode are:

- Branwen's punishment;
- Efnysien's slaughter of the Irishmen concealed in flour bags;

- Efnysien's murder of Gwern.

All three climaxes of the second episode are fully developed and bring the tension to its highest. The undeveloped climax of the third episode is the embedded tale of the five pregnant women in Ireland repopulating Ireland with their sons. This climax is undeveloped: it does not produce as much tension as other, properly developed climaxes in the tale, yet it is the only high point in the episode that can qualify as a climax. This is also part of the reason why this particular embedded tale is not as successful as the one in the first episode. It begins successfully enough and causes a rise in the tension, yet it also ends without any real development of the situation. The only other part of the third episode that could possibly function as a climax, depending on the circumstances of the episode itself and of the tale of *Branwen* as a whole, namely the opening of the door facing Cornwall by Heilyn son of Gwyn as forbidden by Bendigeidfran, is so completely pre-empted by Bendigeidfran's words in the last sub-episode of the second episode and by Manawydan's words in the third episode ("Weldy racco," heb y Manawydan, "y drws ny dylywn ni y agori."⁴⁶⁵) that it cannot function as a climax; instead, its role is 'reduced' to that of an inciting moment.

The sum total of climaxes in *Branwen*, therefore, is six, with five fully-functioning climaxes and a single undeveloped one. The number of climaxes per episode differs from episode to episode and the organisation of the text is lesser than that offered by *Pwyll*. As in *Pwyll*, there is no single definitive climax that would function as the climax of the tale as a whole. The common denominator of the climaxes in *Branwen* is

⁴⁶⁵ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 46.

"See over there," said Manawydan, "the door we must not open." (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 33)

violence: the mutilation of the horses, the iron house scene, the blows that the cook deals Branwen, Efnysien squashing the brains of the hidden Irishmen, Gwern's death in the fire. Almost all of them (with the exception of the iron house scene) also share an attention-commanding hook, namely Efnysien's feelings of anger and insult.

The inciting moments of the three episodes are positioned at the end of the exposition, propelling the action into the right direction and kick-starting the rise in tension: Bendigeidfran's decision to give Branwen to Matholwch as a wife, the dissatisfaction in Ireland stemming from the insult Matholwch received in Wales, the opening of the door towards Aber Henfelen. As in *Pwyll*, sub-episodes do not have their own inciting moments.

The exposition of the first episode is, like that in *Pwyll*, formulaic and thorough in terms of defining the main character of the tale, Bendigeidfran, his social status as “urenhin coronawc ar yr ynys hon”,⁴⁶⁶ his geographical position at the start of the tale as “yn Hardlech yn Ardudwy”,⁴⁶⁷ as well as the names of his siblings, Manawydan son of Llŷr, Nisien and Efnysien, their lineage and characters. It demands no prior knowledge on the part of the reader and provides a perfect exposition to *Branwen* as a whole. The exposition of the second episode is short and relies on the reader being familiar with the main characters and events of the first episode. The exposition of the third episode is fairly detailed and relies for understanding on the part of the reader entirely on the previous two episodes of *Branwen*. A large part of it is a repetition of Bendigidfran's last

⁴⁶⁶ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 29.

“[C]rowned king over this island.” (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 22)

⁴⁶⁷ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 29.

order to the men. The opening of the door towards Aber Henfelen (which the men had been warned not to do by Bendigeidfran) functions as an inciting moment, having been pre-empted in the second episode dénouement.

The dénouement of the first episode comes, rather confusingly, after the embedded tale concerning the cauldron of rebirth. It is rather abrupt, yet satisfactory, and connects seamlessly with the exposition of the second episode. The dénouement of the second episode is very detailed and complete, giving the number and names of the seven men who escaped, Bendigeidfran's order regarding the cutting off of his head and its burial, his description of the future of the seven men, and the death of Branwen.

Ac yna y llas y benn ef, ac y kychwynassant a'r penn gantu drwod, y seithwyr hynn, a Branwen yn wythuet. Ac y Aber Alau yn Talebolyon y doethant y'r tir. Ac yna eisted a wnaethant, a gorfowys. Edrych oheni hitheu ar Iwerdon, ac ar Ynys y Kedyrn, a welei ohonunt. "Oy a uab Duw," heb hi, "guae ui o'm ganedigaeth. Da a dwy ynys a diffeithwyd o'm achaws i." A dodi ucheneit uawr, a thorri y chalon ar hynny. A gwneuthur bed petruel idi, a'e chladu yno yglan Alaw. Ac ar hynny, kerdet a wnaeth y seithwyr parth a Hardlech, a'r penn ganthunt. Val y bydant y kerdet, llyma gyweithyd yn kyuaruot ac wynt, o wyr a gwraged. "A oes gennwch chwi chwedleu?" heb y Manawydan. "Nac oes," heb wynt, "onyt goresgyn o Gaswallawn uab Beli Ynys y Kedyrn, a'y uot yn urenhin coronawc yn Llundain." "Pa daruu," heb wynteu, "y Gradawc uab Bran, a'r seithwyr a edewit y gyt ac ef yn yr ynys honn?" "Dyuot Caswallawn am eu penn, a llad y chwegwyr, a thorri ohonaw ynteu Gradawc y galon o aniuget, am welet y cledyf yn llad y wyr, ac na wydat pwy a'e lladei. Caswallawn a daroed idaw wiscaw llen hut amdanaw, ac ny welei neb ef yn llad y gwyr, namyn y cledyf. Ny uynhei Gaswallawn y lad ynteu, y nei uab y geuynderw oed. (A hwnnw uu y trydyd dyn a torres y gallon o aniuget). Pendarar Dyuet, a oed yn was ieuang gyt a'r seithwyr, a dienghis y'r coet," heb wynt.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁶⁸ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 45-6.

And then his head was cut off, and they set out across the sea with the head, those seven men and Branwen as the eighth. They came ashore at Aber Alaw in Talebolion. And then they sat down and rested. She looked at Ireland and at the Island of the Mighty, what she could see of them. 'Oh son of God,' she said, 'woe that I was ever born. Two good islands have been laid waste because of me!' She gives a mighty sigh, and with that her heart breaks. And they make a four-sided grave for her and bury her there on the banks of the Alaw. Then the seven men journeyed towards Harlech carrying the head. As they were travelling they met a company of men and women. 'Do you have any news?' said Manawydan. 'No,' they said, 'except that Caswallon son of Beli has overrun the Island of the Mighty and is crowned king in London.' 'What

This dénouement undoes the action almost to the point where it could function as the final dénouement of the tale as a whole, were it not for the expectations that Bendigeidfran's prediction raises in the reader. The dénouement of the third episode, and at the same time the dénouement of *Branwen* as a whole is rather abrupt and not very satisfactory. It comes directly after the undeveloped climax of an embedded tale, and it concludes both the tale and the episode very quickly without providing a thorough resolution to either of them. It attempts to provide a recap of some sort, a list of the events that happened in the tale:

A llyna ual y teruyna y geing honn o'r Mabinyogi, o achaws Paluawt Branwen; yr honn a uu tryded anuat paluawt yn yr ynys honn; ac o achaws Yspadawt Uran, pan aeth yniuer pedeir decwlat a seithugeint e Iwerdon, y dial Paluawt Branwen; ac am y ginyaw yn Hardlech seith mlyned; ac am Ganyat Adar Riannon, ac am' Yspydaut Benn pedwarugeint mlyned.⁴⁶⁹

It appears to be constructed so as to provide a certain coherency and unity to *Branwen* as a whole. The formulaic ending, "[a] llyna ual y teruyna y geing hon o'r Mabinyogi", indicates the text is part of a larger unit. It does not appear as the very last words of the tale, as it does in *Pwyll*. It is instead followed by a list recapping the main concerns of the text.

happened to Caradog son of Brân and the seven men who were left with him in this Island?' they said. 'Caswallon attacked them and six men were killed, and Caradog's heart broke from bewilderment at seeing the sword kill his men and not knowing who killed them. Caswallon had put on a magic cloak so that no one could see him killing the men – they could only see the sword. Caswallon did not want to kill Caradog - he was his nephew, his cousin's son. (And he was one of the Three People who Broke their Hearts from Sorrow.) Pendaran Dyfed, who was a young lad with the seven men, escaped to the woods,' they said. (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 32-3)

⁴⁶⁹ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 48.

And that is how this branch of the Mabinogi ends, concerning the blow to Branwen which was one of the Three Unfortunate Blows in this Island; and the assembly of Brân, when the army of one hundred and fifty-four districts went to Ireland to avenge the Blow to Branwen; and the Feasting in Harlech for seven years; and the Singing of the Birds of Rhiannon, and the Assembly of the Head for eighty years. (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 34)

Proinsias Mac Cana referred to this phenomenon as sub-titles and compared them to a phenomenon commonly found in medieval Irish literature, namely that of inserting “sub-titles referring to separate episodes, especially in the interior of a tale”⁴⁷⁰ and drew a comparison with *Fled Bricrenn*. He noted that the use of sub-titles was not common practice in the medieval Welsh prose tradition, according to the extant materials.⁴⁷¹

The two embedded tales have their own expositions. In the tale of the cauldron of rebirth, the exposition is short and somewhat forced, consisting of a short discussion about the origin of the cauldron, a question and the promise to disclose as much as Matholwch knows about it. The dénouement of this embedded tale is fairly swift and blends into the dénouement of the first episode as a whole. The exposition of the embedded tale concerning the five pregnant women in Ireland is almost non-existent; the tale is introduced simply by a single sentence stating that the five pregnant women were the only people left alive in Ireland, and it progresses straight into a climax of sorts, then ends abruptly and is followed by the overall dénouement of *Branwen* as a whole.

The structure of *Branwen* is less clear and less impressively organised than that of *Pwyll*. It shows an attempt at a systematic episodic division, yet this division is not nearly as neat as that of *Pwyll*. There is a lack of symmetry: the number of climaxes in the episodes differs (one proper one and a somewhat underdeveloped one in the first episode, compared to the three proper climaxes and one underdeveloped rise in tension in the

⁴⁷⁰ Proinsias Mac Cana, *Branwen Daughter of Llŷr: a Study of the Irish Affinities and of the Composition of the Second Branch of the Mabinogi* (Cardiff, 1958), 141.

⁴⁷¹ See also Sioned Davies, *Crefft*, 50; Ian Hughes, *Branwen Uerch Lyr: geirfa, ynghyd â chanllawiau ar gyfer darllen a diweddarau'r testun* (Aberystwyth, 1996), 6-7.

second episode), as does the number of sub-episodes. The episodes show major differences in length, and consequently in the development of the action. The embedded episodes of the cauldron and of the five women in Ireland do not fulfil their potential. The second one appears almost redundant. The final dénouement is too abrupt, too quick and too unnatural. It is as if the story of the five pregnant Irishwomen were inserted to break a previous, perhaps original, dénouement in two parts, thus providing false expectations in the reader and interrupting the tension line, which resulted in the creation of the third, undeveloped episode.

The plot line shows an attempt at symmetry and an attempt at creating a parallel structure to that of Pwyll, yet both attempts are less than successful. The further division into sub-episodes is made more confusing by the use of embedded tales. It is evident that in the case of *Branwen*, the redactor must have struggled with the material and put a considerable amount of effort into reworking the structure of the tale into a text that is relatively coherent to a modern reader.

IV.5.1.3 *Manawydan*

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Mark on the horizontal axis	Event
A Insufficient exposition/connection with dénouement of Branwen	After Bendigeidfran's head is buried on the Gwynfryn in London facing towards France, Manawydan feels great sorrow and laments that he is the only one with nowhere to go. Pryderi acknowledges that Caswallon has wronged Manawydan, and that Manawydan has never claimed territory or land.
B	Pryderi offers Manawydan the seven cantrefs of Dyfed (which would remain in Pryderi's name) and, with them, Rhiannon, who lives there. The suggestion is agreeable to Manwydan and he decides to go with Pryderi.
C Exposition	Manawydan and Pryderi set off for Dyfed and are met at Arberth by Rhiannon and Cigfa, who have had a feast prepared for them.
D Note the lack of a major inciting moment – it is actually in <i>Pwyll</i> .	Manawydan and Rhiannon converse and he finds her pleasant. He agrees to Pryderi's proposal. Riannon, upon hearing the conversation between Manawydan and Pryderi, inquires about the proposal and agrees to it. Manawydan sleeps with Rhiannon. Pryderi suggests he go to pay homage to Caswallon in England while everybody continues feasting; Rhiannon advises him to wait until Caswallon has returned from Kent and is closer to Dyfed. Pryderi agrees. The feast over, they

	<p>make a circuit of Dyfed and entertain themselves by hunting. A very close friendship develops between the four of them.</p> <p>Pryderi goes to pay homage to Caswallon in Oxford. Upon his return, feasting recommences. A feast is begun at Arberth.</p>
E	During the feast, the four proceed to Gorsedd Arberth, accompanied by a number of people.
F	They hear a great noise and a thick blanket of mist envelopes them. Suddenly everything becomes bright.
G Climax 1	<p>They notice that everything around them has disappeared – the people, the dwelling places, the animals; only the four of them remain.</p> <p>Manawydan suggest they go and search for the retinue; they find no-one.</p>
H	<p>They continue to feast and wander through the land looking for anything or anyone, but they see nothing except wild animals.</p> <p>They spend two years like that before they grow tired of it.</p>
I	Manawydan suggests going to England and finding a craft to make a living.
J	<p>The four arrive in Hereford and take up the craft of saddlemaking, drawing upon Manawydan's knowledge of the craft as learnt from Llasar Llaesgyngwyd. They are very successful at it. The saddlers, unhappy at the loss of custom and profits, decide to kill Manawydan and Pryderi.</p>

	<p>Manawydan and Pryderi find out about that and debate what they should do. Pryderi suggests staying and killing the saddlers. Manawydan warns that would give them a bad reputation and they might be imprisoned; he suggests relocating to another city and starting anew.</p>
K	<p>The four go to another city; Manawydan decides to take up shield making. Just as before, they are very successful in their enterprise. Once again, the townsmen become angry and decide to kill them. Manawydan and Pryderi receive a warning; Pryderi suggests fighting. Manawydan warns that Caswallon would find out about it and that would be their ruin. He proposes going to yet another town and starting again.</p>
L	<p>The four go to another town and Manawydan decides that shoemaking will be the craft to take up since shoemakers will not have the courage to oppose them. Using the finest leather and gilded buckles made by the best goldsmiths in town, they are very successful in their craft. The dissatisfied shoemakers decide to kill them. Pryderi is eager to fight, yet Manawydan refuses and decides to leave England for Dyfed.</p>
M	<p>They come to Dyfed, go to Arberth and begin to support themselves by hunting. This lasts for a year and a month.</p>
N	<p>Pryderi and Manawydan go hunting; some of their dogs approach a thicket and return petrified. Pryderi suggests having</p>

	<p>a closer look to see what is in the thicket. Upon approaching the thicket, they see a white wild boar rise from it, which they hunt.</p>
O	<p>The boar leads them to a fort and disappears into it, followed by the dogs. The men realize that they have never seen the fort there before. They wait for the dogs, but the dogs do not return. Pryderi decides to go into the fort to look for them.</p> <p>Manawydan advises against entering the fort because he sees the connexion between the spell cast upon Dyfed and the fort.</p>
P	<p>Pryderi refuses to follow Manawydan's advice and enters the fort. The only thing he sees is a well with a golden bowl fastened to four chains reaching up to the sky.</p>
Q Climax 2	<p>Enraptured, he grabs the bowl; his hands stick to it, his feet stick to the marble underneath, and he loses power of speech.</p>
R	<p>After waiting for Pryderi for a long time, Manawydan returns to the court. Rhiannon questions him about Pryderi's whereabouts. Manawydan retells the story. Rhiannon accuses Manawydan of losing Pryderi through being a poor companion and friend, and makes for the fort herself.</p>
S Climax 3	<p>Upon finding the fort with the gate open and Pryderi stuck to the bowl, she, too, touches the bowl and suffers the same fate. A tumultuous noise and a blanket of mist appear, and the fort disappears with Pryderi and Rhiannon in it.</p>

T	Manawydan suggests to Cigfa that they go to England, saying it would be easier for them to make a living there now that the dogs have been lost.
U	In England, Manawydan chooses shoemaking as his craft, although Cigfa objects that it is too lowly and dirty for a man of his standing. He is very successful in his craft; after a year, the shoemakers decide to kill him.
V Dénouement	Upon finding out about the shoemakers' plan, Cigfa questions why they should put up with it. Manawydan decides they will return to Dyfed.
W Exposition	In Dyfed, they settle down in Arberth. Manawydan begins fishing and hunting. He also begins to cultivate the soil and sows three fields with wheat he brought from England.
X Inciting moment	The wheat is ripe and Manawydan decides he will harvest the wheat in the first field the next day.
Y	In the morning, he finds the wheat gone, nothing but bare stalks where the ears of wheat have been broken off and taken away.
Z	Surprised, he goes to look at the second field, where the wheat is ripe and ready for reaping. He decides he will reap it the following day. The next day, the second field is bare when he arrives.
AA	Manawydan realizes that the destruction is being brought to its

	<p>end and that it is directed both towards him and towards the land. He goes to look at the third field and finds the wheat ripe. Realizing that the third field of wheat will suffer the same fate, he decides to keep watch to save the wheat and find out who is responsible for what has happened.</p>
AB	<p>Manawydan keeps watch over the wheat. Near midnight, he hears the loudest noise in the world. He sees countless mice making for the field and carrying away the wheat. Manawydan begins to chase the mice unsuccessfully.</p>
AC Climax 1	<p>Noticing that one of the mice is very fat and therefore slower than the rest of them, he concentrates his efforts on that one and catches it. He puts it in his glove and returns to court.</p>
AD	<p>He explains to Cigfa that he has caught a thief and that he intends to hang it.</p>
AE	<p>Cigfa reminds him that it is not proper for a man of his status to hang a lowly creature like the mouse, but he is determined to serve the mouse as it deserves.</p>
AF	<p>He makes for Gorsedd Arberth and as he begins to make gallows, he notices a cleric in ragged clothes approaching.</p>
AG	<p>The cleric enquires what Manawydan is doing and is told that he is hanging a thief. The cleric replies that such an activity is inappropriate for a man of Manawydan's status and suggests that he let the mouse go. Manawydan refuses and the cleric</p>

	offers him a pound if he lets the mouse go. Manawydan refuses again and the cleric goes his way.
AH	Manawydan continues setting up the gallows as he sees a priest approaching on horseback. The priest asks Manawydan what he is doing and is given a reply similar to the one given to the cleric. The priest says he would rather buy the mouse than see a man of Manawydan's status handling it, and asks Manawydan to let the mouse go. Manawydan refuses; the priest offers him three pounds in exchange for the mouse. Again, Manawydan refuses and the priest continues his journey.
AI	Manawydan continues his preparations for the hanging and sees a bishop approaching with his baggage and entourage. The bishop enquires what Manawydan is doing and is given the same reply as the two church officials before him. The bishop offers to buy the mouse from Manawydan rather than seeing him engaged with something that is inappropriate for his status and offers him seven pounds for it. Manawydan refuses. The bishop offers him twenty-four pounds for the mouse; Manawydan refuses. The bishop offers him every horse he can see on the plain and the seven loads of baggage that are on the seven horses. Manawydan refuses.
AJ	The bishop asks Manawydan to name his price, and

Climax 2	<p>Manawydan requests the release of Rhiannon and Pryderi. The bishop agrees. Manawydan, saying that that is not enough, requests the removal of the enchantment and magic from the seven cantrefs of Dyfed. The bishop again agrees. Manawydan requests to know who the mouse is. The bishop tells him the mouse is his wife. Manawydan requests to know how she came to him. The bishop explains that he is Llwyd son of Cil Coed, and that he put the enchantment on Dyfed to avenge Gwawl son of Clud who was humiliated at the court of Hyfaidd Hen a long time ago when Pryderi's father Pwyll played the Badger in the Bag with Gwawl. The mice were his retinue, who were joined in the destruction of wheat on the third night by his pregnant wife and her ladies of the court. Because of his wife's pregnancy, Manawydan was able to catch her. Still refusing to let the mouse go, Manawydan requests that there will never be any spell on Dyfed. Llwyd agrees. Manawydan requests that no vengeance be taken on Pryderi, Rhiannon or himself. Llwyd agrees, saying that if Manawydan had not requested that, all the trouble would have fallen upon him. Manawydan refuses to set the mouse free until he sees Pryderi and Rhiannon, upon which they appear.</p>
AK	<p>Manawydan releases the mouse and Llwyd changes her back into her proper form.</p>

AL Resolution	All the land and dwellings reappear as they were at their best, with their inhabitants and herds.
AM	Manawydan inquires what sort of captivity Rhiannon and Pryderi were in and is told that they had asses' collars and gate-hammers around their necks, respectively. This is why this branch of the Mabinogi was called the Mabinogi of the Collar and the Hammer.

Manawydan, just like the previously discussed narratives, falls into three parts, but this arbitrary division immediately singles *Manawydan* out as a tale with a very unusual structure. Of the three episodes, only two (the second and the third) have the prescribed Aristotelian parts, namely the beginning, the middle, and the end. The first episode lacks a proper beginning of its own, as well as a proper middle: it has no exposition or climax its own. In fact, the first episode of *Manawydan* exhibits the tension pattern typical of dénouement, not of exposition, with the tension falling steadily.

Guedy daruot y'r seithwyr a dywedysam ni uchot; cladu penn Bendigeiduran yn y Gwynuryn yn Llundain, a'y wyneb ar Freinc, edrych a wnaeth Manauydan ar y dref yn Llundain, ac ar y gedymdeithon, a dodi ucheneit uawr, a chymryt diruawr alar a hiraeth yndaw.⁴⁷²

This, combined with the contents/story of the first episode, gives the impression that *Manawydan* begins before *Branwen* has ended, which in turn gives the impression that either *Manawydan* is part of *Branwen* and thus is not an entirely independent tale in its own right, or that the very first episode was deliberately crafted in the form in which it is

⁴⁷² Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 49.

After the seven men we spoke of above had buried Bendigeidfran's head in London, with its face towards France, Manawydan looked at the town and at his companions, and heaved a great sigh, and immense sorrow and longing came over him. (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 35)

known to us today to establish a strong connection with *Pwyll* and *Branwen*. *Manawydan* completely lacks the formulaic beginning that is so characteristic of other Welsh tales such as *Pwyll*, *Branwen*, *Math*, *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys*, *Breuddwyd Macsen*, *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy* and *Culhwch ac Olwen*. Discussing the formula, Sioned Davies notes:

[y] mae tair o'r *Pedeir Keinc* yn dechrau yn yr un modd, gydag enw arglwydd a'i statws, enw ei diriogaeth, a lleoliad yr arglwydd ar yr amser neilltuol hwnnw. Cyn yr elfen olaf ceir ymadrodd amseryddol sydd yn hoelio'r sylw ar ddigwyddiad arbennig [...] Dechreuau'r drydedd gainc yn wahanol, gan adlewyrchu ymdrech ymwybodol ar ran yr awdur i gyfuno'r ail a'r drydedd gainc. Sylwer hefyd ar y defnydd o 'uchod' yn yr agoriad, sydd yn perthyn i draddodiad ysgrifenedig yn hytrach na llafar [...]⁴⁷³

Even the *Three Romances* all seem to follow a similar fashion as far as their beginnings are concerned. *Manawydan*, however, stands on its own here: its beginning is in *Branwen*, so to speak; the typical formula which would be expected in the exposition, namely 'X son of Y was [social status and geographical definition of power]', is absent; the tale relies heavily on the reader's knowledge of the two tales that precede *Manawydan* in the cycle; Manawydan's parentage appears in that form only in the second episode of the tale, and not independently but through Pryderi's words as he informs Rhiannon that he has given her as a wife to Manwydan son of Llŷr. The first semblance of Manawydan's lineage is given in a radically different manner, again through Pryderi's words, establishing him as Caswallon's cousin (and giving Caswallon's social status), and again through Manawydan's own words in his reply to Pryderi, when he defines himself as Bendigeidfran's brother. No paternal or maternal lineage is given for Manawydan until the second episode. What is more, Manawydan's social position and territory are not

⁴⁷³ Sioned Davies, *Crefft*, 129.

given in the traditional formulaic fashion, perhaps because the narrative relies on *Branwen* to provide both Manawydan's lineage and social status as well as his brother's territory, to which Manawydan would be heir following the deaths of his brother and nephew, and partly because Manawydan has no territory because it has been usurped by his cousin. The first person whose territory is mentioned is Pryderi, along with his maternal lineage lineage:

“Seith cantref Dyuet yr edewit y mi,” heb y Pryderi, “a Rhiannon uy mam yssyd yno.”⁴⁷⁴

This is followed by Cigfa's paternal lineage, and only later by a mention of Manawydan's lineage by Pryderi:

“Arglwydes,” heb ef Pryderi, “mi a’th roessum yn wreic y Uanawydau uab Llŷr.”⁴⁷⁵

It is evident that prior knowledge on the part of the reader regarding Manawydan, his lineage, social status and circumstances is assumed.

The lack of a formulaic beginning aside, the three episodes of *Manawydan* are:

- 'Link' (marked in blue on the graph);
- Manawydan's losses (marked in red on the graph);
- Manawydan's losses restored (marked in green on the graph).

Contrary to the degree of episodic independence exhibited in *Pwyll* and to a degree in *Branwen*, the episodes of *Manawydan* are extremely interconnected and therefore

⁴⁷⁴ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 49.

"The seven cantrefs of Dyfed were left to me," said Pryderi, "and Rhiannon, my mother, lives there." (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 35)

⁴⁷⁵ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 50.

"My lady," said Pryderi, "I have given you as a wife to Manawydan son of Llŷr." (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 36)

interdependent. The way *Manawydan* is introduced, the text is also greatly dependent on *Branwen*. This is evident in the lack of any element resembling an introductory formula that would give the tale more autonomy, in the thematic connection between *Branwen* and *Manawydan* established by the first episode of *Manawydan*, and by the unusual use of the adverb *uchod* 'above', as pointed out by Sioned Davies in the quotation given earlier.

The first episode, the 'link' is not independent at all and is so closely connected to *Branwen* as to appear to be part of it. The second episode relies for any background information to a degree on the 'link', and even more so on *Branwen*. To achieve a more independent position, it would need a story line less dependent on the relationships and alliances established in *Branwen*. The third episode relies for its success on the second episode to such a degree that it cannot exist very well on its own. The restoration of Pryderi and Rhiannon, and the lifting of the spell over Dyfed require the reader to understand the circumstances of their disappearance in the episode prior to it. Such is the importance ascribed to the disappearances in the second episode that the third episode, when isolated, lacks too many elements to be functional on its own.

The second and third episodes have a number of sub-episodes each, namely three in the second episode and two in the third episode. The sub-episodes are interconnected and depend on each other to provide cohesion. Each sub-episode has a climax. This yields a sum total of five climaxes to *Manawydan* as a whole: none in the first episode,

three in the second episode, and two in the third episode. All climaxes are fully developed. The climaxes of the second episode are:

- the disappearance of everything and everyone in Dyfed;
- the moment Pryderi grabs the bowl in the fort and is thus lost to Manawydan;
- the moment Rhiannon grabs the bowl and the fort disappears with her and Pryderi.

All three climaxes are fully developed and raise the tension to its utmost. The same is true of the two climaxes of the third episode:

- Manawydan's capture of the pregnant mouse;
- Manawydan naming his price and negotiating the terms and conditions of the return of Pryderi and Rhiannon.

The first episode, functioning as a link between *Manawydan* and the tale which occurs directly before it in the manuscripts (*Branwen*), exhibits a complete lack of climax, as well as a complete lack of a proper exposition.

The exposition of the tale as a whole, given the absence of formula and background information on the protagonist, is decidedly unsatisfactory, if not lacking altogether. The same is true of the expositions of both the second and the third episodes. The exposition of the second episode is too dependent on the 'link' and on *Branwen* to be really noticeable as an exposition in its own right. The exposition of the third episode blends in with the dénouement of the second episode, thus strengthening the connection between the two episodes even more.

The dénouement of the tale as a whole, which is at the same time the dénouement of the third episode, follows a lengthy build-up to a climax and is comparatively quick, but no less thorough. It swiftly resolves all the events of the tale, restoring the losses and providing Manawydan with a territory.

Ac yna kyuodi a oruc ynteu ac edrych. A phan edrych, ef a welei yr holl wlat yn gyuanhed, ac yn gyweir o'y holl alauoed a'y hanedeu.
“Pa ryw wassanaeth y bu Pryderi a Riannon yndaw?” heb ef. “Pryderi a uydei ac yrd porth uy llys i am y uynwgyl, a Riannon a uydei a mynweireu yr essynn, wedy bydyn yn kywein gueir, am y mynwgyl hitheu. Ac yuelly y bu eu carchar.”
Ac o achaws y carchar hwnnw, y gelwit y kyuarwydyt hwnnw, Mabinogi Mynweir a Mynord. Ac yuelly y teruyna y geing honn yma o'r Mabinogy.⁴⁷⁶

The very last sentence, the closing formula, includes *Manawydan* as an equal part into the larger cycle of the stories of the Mabinogi.

An interesting detail, however, is the sentence immediately preceding the expected formula. It suggests that the text has an alternative title, Mabinogi Mynweir a Mynord, after the punishment Pryderi and Rhiannon endured while in captivity. The reason for this alternative title is unknown, but it sets *Manawydan* apart from the other stories of the *Mabinogi* as we know them today.

The dénouement of the second episode blends with the exposition of the next episode so thoroughly it is difficult to draw a defining line that separates them. This line is the same line that separates two parts of Manawydan's life from each other, namely that of his life in Dyfed with Rhiannon, and that of his life without Dyfed and Rhiannon, trying to

⁴⁷⁶ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 65.

Then Manawydan got up and looked around. And when he looked, he could see all the land inhabited and complete with all its herds and its houses. “In what sort of captivity were Pryderi and Rhiannon?” said Manawydan. “Pryderi had the gate-hammers of my court around his neck, while around hers Rhiannon had the collars of the asses after they had been hauling hay. And that was their imprisonment.” Because of that imprisonment, this story was called the Mabinogi of the Collar and the Hammer. And so ends this branch of the Mabinogi. (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 45)

restore them. The second and third episodes of *Manawydan* are extremely closely connected with each other. They complete each other in a unique way that is absent from *Pwyll* and *Branwen*.

Manawydan also stands apart as the only one of the four stories exhibiting almost no real inciting moments of its own. The 'link', lacking the exposition, the climax, and any real action in general, does not have an inciting moment at all. The second episode, curiously enough, has an inciting moment, but in another tale: *Pwyll*. The game of the Badger in the Bag, played in the second episode of *Pwyll*, is the inciting moment of *Manawydan* as a whole, and of its second episode. It motivates the disappearance of everything and everyone in Dyfed. In the absence of a proper inciting moment in its own right, the disappearance unconvincingly takes on the function of the inciting moment and attempts to function as a catalyst for ensuing dramatic action. Because the disappearance itself is unmotivated, it is not a convincing inciting moment and the narrative is therefore rather unmotivated itself. In the third episode, there is a semblance of an inciting moment when Manawydan decides to harvest the wheat and responds actively to the disappearance of it.

The two 'plateau' areas, one each in the second and third episodes, denote Manawydan's adventures in England. Each time, he takes on a craft to make a living and excels at it, only to invoke profound hatred and antagonism on the part of the locals involved in the same craft, followed by death threats and his swift retreat, either to a new locale in England or back to Dyfed. It is obvious that these 'plateau' areas are present to

give the reader an insight into Manawydan's character and his situation, since they stall the action and further slow down the already slow narrative in a way that is otherwise not typical of the Welsh texts.

The organisation of the text is significantly different from that in *Pwyll* and decidedly unnatural regarding the lack of exposition and the connection with *Branwen*, both courtesy of the 'link'. The 'link' and the connection it establishes lend themselves well to the suggestion that the Four Branches in the form that has been preserved for us were intended to function as parts of a larger cycle of tales. The link seems to be an artificial redactor's addition to the story to aid the cohesion, or unity, of the Four Branches. The false exposition provided in the link is rather superfluous to the story as a whole. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the number of stories that may have been included in the cycle remains unknown, since four is possibly an unlikely number to complete the cycle, yet no other Welsh tales that would fit into the cycle thematically have been preserved or discovered.⁴⁷⁷ Like *Branwen*, *Manawydan* also shows some evidence that the redactor might have struggled with his material and attempted to strengthen the narrative by superimposing a somewhat artificial structure onto the material in an attempt to also make the text an obvious part of a larger cycle of tales. For a story as complex as *Manawydan*, and so dependent on other tales in the cycle, the structure is relatively well and systematically organised, although it does not compare very successfully to the structure of *Pwyll*.

⁴⁷⁷ See also Sioned Davies, *Crefft*, 46.

The tripartite structure of *Manawydan* has been discussed in considerable detail by Ian Hughes in his article ‘Tripartite Structure in Manawydan Uab Llŷr’. He defines

three very distinct sections of the narrative: a short introduction; the disappearances; the restoration”.⁴⁷⁸

These parts correspond to what is defined in this thesis as link, first and second episode. Hughes also points out that the introduction differs stylistically from the typical beginning of the other three branches, and links it stylistically to the Welsh translation of *Historia Regum Britanniae*, which supports the possibility that it was not naturally the beginning of the branch in the form it is known in today. If the person who wrote the *Four Branches* was familiar with that work, it is not impossible that he would have imitated the style of *Historia Regum Britanniae* and changed the beginning of *Manawydan* in order to establish a tangible connection between *Branwen* and *Manawydan* and promote the unity of the *Four Branches*. Hence my choice of term ‘link’ for the ‘short introduction’. If the link did not exist, the story as analysed in terms of plot line would display two parts, which fails to tie in with the significance and presence of tripartite structure in Welsh literature, which has been discussed by several scholars⁴⁷⁹ in the past. Indeed, ‘three’ is of enormous importance in *Manawydan*: three returns from England, three trades Manawydan and Pryderi take up, three attempts to rescue the mouse, three female characters, three secondary male characters, three losses that Manawydan suffers, three offers/gifts he receives from Pryderi, three disappearances, three fields of wheat, three destructions thereof, three levels of search, three parts of the preparation for

⁴⁷⁸ Ian Hughes, ‘Tripartite Structure’, 100.

⁴⁷⁹ R. M. Jones, ‘Tri mewn llenyddiaeth’, *Llên Cymru*, 14 (1981), 92-110; Jeffrey Gantz, ‘Thematic Structure in the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*’, *Medium Aevum* 47 (1978), 247-54; Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan, ‘Triadic structure in the *Four Branches of the Mabinogi*’, *Shadow*, 5 (No. 1) (1988), 3-11; Ian Hughes, ‘Die drei Zweige’; Sioned Davies, *Crefft*.

hanging, three scenes on the mound. This threefold repetition⁴⁸⁰ is too structured and appears too often for it to be coincidental. Hughes suggests that

[t]aken together, all these examples of tripartite structure lend to the whole text a certain unity of composition. Indeed, there does seem to be a great deal of cohesion in the text, suggesting perhaps that it was indeed an intended and conscious composition by an author who adapted traditional elements and themes, who gave a new dimension to certain well established characters, and who carefully utilized tripartite structures and triadic groupings in an effective and even subtle way while relating his story and conveying his ‘message’.⁴⁸¹

There is no doubt that Hughes’ argument is correct. The tripartite structure provides a unity of composition on the level of the story as well as on the level of the cycle. It is obvious that both the original author (if different from the final redactor of the cycle as a whole) of *Manawydan* and the final redactor of the Mabinogi cycle were very aware and conscious of the effect of such a structure on multiple levels.

⁴⁸⁰ Ian Hughes, “Tripartite Structure”, 108.

⁴⁸¹ Ian Hughes, “Tripartite Structure”, 108.

IV.5.1.4 *Math*

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Mark on the horizontal axis	Event
A Exposition	Math son of Mathonwy is lord over Gwynedd, and Pryderi son of Pwyll is lord over twenty-one cantrefs in the south (the seven cantrefs of Dyfed, the seven cantrefs of Morgannwg, the four cantrefs of Ceredigion, and the three cantrefs of Ystrad Tywi). Math cannot live unless his feet are resting in the lap of a virgin, except in wartime. His virgin is Goewin daughter of Pebin. Gwydion son of Dôn and his brother Gilfaethwy (Math's nephews) perform the circuit in his stead.
B Inciting moment	Gilfaethwy sets his heart on Goewin and because of his love for her, he wastes away until he is difficult to recognize. He refuses to confide in Gwydion because Math would find out about it; Gwydion, however, offers to help him by creating a war so that Gilfaethwy can get the maiden.
C	They tell Math about Pryderi's swine— interesting new creatures with superior-tasting flesh. Math is interested and Gwydion offers to go to get the swine from Pryderi.
D	They travel to Ceredigion with a retinue of ten, disguised as poets; they spend the night feasting with Pryderi and telling stories. After being admired and praised for his storytelling gift, Gwydion asks Pryderi for the swine; Pryderi refuses because he must keep the swine until they

	have doubled their number, Gwydion promises that he will exchange them for something. He uses magic to conjure up twelve stallions, twelve hounds, twelve collars with twelve leashes, twelve saddles and bridles and twelve shields, all seemingly made of gold and with superior craftsmanship.
E	Pryderi gladly exchanges the swine for that. Gwydion, knowing that the magic will only last for a short time, travels quickly through several places in Ceredigion and Powys to the strongest part of Gwynedd. In Caer Dathyl, they discover that both Math and Pryderi are mustering their troops. Armed, they travel to Pennard.
F Climax 1	The brothers return to Caer Dathyl at night and Gilfaethwy rapes Goewin.
G	At dawn, the brothers return. Pryderi attacks and a great massacre follows. The men of the South retreat. An attempt at peace is made and broken. Pryderi requests that the armies be called off and the matter settled between him and Gwydion. Pryderi is killed in the duel with Gwydion and is buried in Maentwrog above Y Felenrhyd.
H	The armies return home, the hostages are released. Math makes for Caer Dathyl; the brothers go on a circuit of Gwynedd.
I	Upon returning home, Math is told by Goewin that she is no longer a virgin and that she was raped.
J	Math arranges recompense for the maiden by marrying her and giving her the authority over his kingdom. After a ban is imposed on

	Gwydion and Gilfaethwy, which prevents them from getting food and drink, the brothers return to court at Math's will. Math decides to punish them for Pryderi's death and for his own shame.
K Climax 2	Math punishes the brothers by changing them into animals three times; each time, they swap gender, live together for a year, mate and bring their off-spring at the end of the year. Gwydion and Gilfaethwy are changed, respectively, into a stag and a hind; a wild sow and a wild boar; and a he-wolf and a she-wolf. Each time they bring their off-spring, Math baptizes the child and has him fostered and baptized.
L	When the brothers have been shamed and punished enough, Math returns them to their proper forms; the friendship is redeemed.
M	Math asks for advice concerning a new virgin. Gwydion suggests Aranrhod daughter of Dôn, the king's niece. Aranrhod declares her virginity.
N Climax 3	Aranrhod fails the virginity test by dropping a large boy; making for the door, she drops a little something.
O	Gwydion hides the little something in a chest at the foot of his bed.
P Dénouement	The large boy is baptized Dylan; he makes for the sea and takes on the nature of the sea. He is killed by his uncle Gofannon.
Q Exposition	Gwydion finds a boy in the chest in his chamber. He arranges for the boy to be reared for a year.
R	The boy, after the second year, goes to court. He loves Gwydion and is

Inciting moment	reared at the court until the age of four. Gwydion takes him walking and makes for Caer Aranrhod.
S	Aranrhod is ashamed of the boy and pronounces a curse on him – that he will never have a name unless she gives him one. Gwydion, angered, retreats with the boy.
T	At Aber Menai, he conjures up a ship and Cordovan leather out of dulse and seaweed. They sail to Caer Aranrhod and begin to make shoes, their appearance changed so they cannot be recognized.
U	Aranrhod orders a pair of shoes. The first pair is made up too big, the second one too small. Gwydion demands to measure her foot himself.
V Climax 1	When Aranrhod arrives, the boy aims at a wren and hit it between the tendon and the bone on its leg. Aranrhod says that the fair-haired one hit the bird with a skilful hand; Gwydion tells her she has named the boy.
W	Everything vanishes and they return to their shapes. Aranrhod pronounces the second curse upon her son, namely that he shall not have arms until she has given him them.
X	Gwydion and Lleu retreat to Dinas Dinlleu, where Lleu is instructed in riding until he matures. Noticing Lleu's desire for horses and weapons, Gwydion takes him on an errand to Caer Aranrhod.
Y	At Caer Aranrhod, they feast and entertain her by telling stories. While everyone is asleep, Gwydion conjures up a fleet outside the fort.

	Gwydion advises Aranrhod they close the fort and defend themselves.
Z Climax 2	Aranrhod arms Lleu herself. Gwydion tells her that she has just armed her own son and that the fleet was conjured up to trick her into doing so.
AA	Aranrhod swear the third Curse on Lleu, namely that he shall never have a wife from the race that is on the earth today.
AB	Gwydion complains to Math about Aranrhod's treatment of Lleu and relates to him how the boy got named and armed. Math offers to help conjure up a wife for Lleu by the use of magic.
AC	Math and Gwydion use flowers of the oak, the broom, and the meadowsweet, and magic to create a wife, Blodeuedd, for Lleu.
AD Partial resolution	After Lleu sleeps with Blodeuedd, Math gives him the cantref of Dinoding and Lleu sets up a court and rules there.
AE	Lleu sets off to visit Math; Blodeuedd is left on her own. Wandering around the court, she hears the sounds of hunting and invites the nobleman in.
AF	She falls in love with the nobleman, Gronw Pebr, and he with her. She keeps him with her for three nights; he advises asking Lleu in what manner he may die.
AG	Lleu returns and Blodeuedd pretends to be worried about his death. Lleu explains that he cannot be killed unless the spear that struck him were made in the course of a year, and only when people were at mass

	on Sundays; neither on horseback nor on foot; only if a bath is made for him on a riverbank, with an arched roof above the tub, and if the well is thatched and watertight, and a billy goat is brought, upon which he stands with one foot, with his other foot on the edge of the tub.
AH	Blodeuedd informs Gronw about that, and he sets to making the spear as instructed.
AI Climax 1	After a year, Blodeuedd asks Lleu to demonstrate in what circumstances he may be killed, to which he readily agrees. After a bath, he puts one foot on the tub and the other on a billy goat. Gronw aims at Lleu with the poisoned spear; Lleu changes into an eagle and flies away with a terrible scream.
AJ	Gronw and Blodeuedd spend the night together; Gronw takes possession of Ardudwy.
AK	The news reaches Math and Gwydion and they are sorrowful. Gwydion decides he will go and get news of Lleu. In Maenor Bennardd he stays with a man whose sow has been behaving in a strange way, namely she disappears as soon as the pen is open and cannot be found until she returns at night.
AL	Gwydion follows the sow until she comes to a tree and starts feeding on maggots and rotten flesh that fall from an eagle that is sitting in the tree. Gwydion, thinking the eagle may be Lleu, sings an <i>englyn</i> and the eagle lowers himself to the middle of the tree. Encouraged by the success of this, Gwydion sings two more <i>englynion</i> until the eagle is

	sitting on his knee. Gwydion strikes the eagle with his magic wand and the eagle changes into Lleu, all skin and bones.
AM	They make for Caer Dathyl and the best physicians are brought to restore him to health. After a year, Lleu has recovered and begins demanding recompense. Gwynedd is mustered and they set off for Ardudwy. Gwydion makes for Mur Castell.
AN	Blodeuedd and her maidens run away; they are so afraid they can only travel turned backwards, so they fall into a lake and are drowned and Blodeuedd is left on her own.
AO Climax 2	Gwydion catches up with Blodeuedd and threatens to do worse to her than kill her. He changes her into an owl.
AP	Gronw offers territory, silver or gold to Lleu for the insult; Lleu refuses and is only willing to accept Gronw putting himself in the same position as he was himself when Gronw aimed at him. Gronw asks his noblemen, his retinue and his foster brothers if anyone is willing to take the blow on his behalf; they are not. Standing where Lleu did, Gronw asks to shield himself with a stone, because he was deceived by a woman to do what he did. Lleu allows him that.
AQ Climax 3	He takes the stone and positions himself. Lleu's spear pierces the stone and Gronw is killed.
AR	Lleu takes possession of his land and prospers.
AS	After that, he is lord over Gwynedd.

Dénouement	
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Math, like the other three tales, exhibits a tripartite structure. Each of the three episodes is further subdivided into three sub-episodes. The three main episodes of *Math* are:

- the rape of the foot maiden;
- Llew's childhood and up-bringing;
- Llew's manhood, or Blodeuedd's treachery.

These episodes are very independent of each other, the first one more so than the second and third episode. The first episode is in fact so independent from the rest of the story that it could easily be left out altogether, with no real adverse effect on the rest of the story, except perhaps for some clarity regarding the relationships between certain characters and some relatively minor background details, such as the origin of Aranrhod's shame and her hatred for Llew in the second episode and Gwydion's attachment to Llew, his skills and powers of magic in the third episode.

In fact, there are at least two aspects of the first episode which make the exclusion of the first episode from the text as a whole seem almost more sensible than including it. The first one regards the rather unusual development of Gwydion's character from a relatively negative character who organises the rape of Math's foot maiden, thus dishonouring the king, who deceives by magic and sabotages the peaceful and just reign of the kingdom by creating a war between Gwynedd and Dyfed, to a very caring and

sympathetic character, the king's advisor and friend who uses magic for good causes only and who occupies himself with bringing up his foster child (his nephew) and ensuring the 'milestones' in his life such as being given a name, arms and marrying a wife are marked accordingly, and later on does his very best to find the said foster child after he has been changed into an eagle, return him to his proper shape, restore him back to health and avenge the shame his wife had brought upon him by changing her shape into that of an owl. As a character, Gwydion's is hardly recognisable after the first episode. His cunning, his tricks and arrogance are no longer present, replaced by caring, altruism, protectiveness and righteous anger against those who hurt and deceive the one character he is incredibly close to. This change in Gwydion's character is difficult to explain on the basis of the information provided in the first and second episodes. None of the other tales in the cycle present such a great and inexplicable change in any of their characters.

The second aspect that speaks for the successful exclusion of the first episode is the disappearance of certain characters (such as Goewin, Gilfaethwy and Dylan) that appear in the first episode. They never appear in the second and third episodes, nor are they ever referred to again. These characters are also the ones who seem to have 'doubles', as discussed by Andrew Welsh,⁴⁸² in Aranrhod, Gwydion and Lleu. Some of them, for example Dylan and to a degree Gilfaethwy, seem superfluous to the point that they could be left out entirely and their role in the first episode could be merged with that of their 'double'.

⁴⁸² Andrew Welsh, "Doubling and incest in the *Mabinogi*", *Speculum* 65 (1990), 344-62.

Coincidentally, the translation of the Mabinogion into Slovenian⁴⁸³ provides adequate proof of the fact that an independent episode can be removed and the remaining story function perfectly well (in the eyes of a reader who is not aware that a part is missing), as it appears without any further changes to the translation, and without translator's notes. The story of *Math*, in the Slovenian translation, begins with what I call the second episode, with Gwydion in bed and the baby crying in the chest next to the bed. Despite an introduction to the translation that offers a brief guide to and explanation of Welsh tradition and culture, and an afterword that deals with the pronunciation of names, there is no mention of any part of the text being left out deliberately. All the other tales are present in their entirety, and any reader who is not familiar with the Welsh tradition transmitted through the medium of another foreign language such as English, German or French, is utterly unaware of the missing part in *Math*. There is no literary study of medieval Welsh literature available in Slovenian, since Celtic studies are an unknown area in Slovenia; therefore, no suspicion that the translation is incomplete, and therefore no explanation as to the reasoning behind the omission has ever been made.⁴⁸⁴

Another aspect that should perhaps arouse some suspicion in the reader regarding the necessity of the inclusion of the first episode is its formulaic beginning

Math uab Mathonwy oed arglwyd ar Wyned, a Pryderi uab Pwyll oed arglwyd ar un cantref ar ugeint yn y Deheu. Sef oed y rei hynny, seith cantref Dyuet, a seith Morgannhwc, a phedwar Kyredigyawn, a thri Ystrat Tywi.⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸³ Maja Kraigher-Žaucer (transl.), *Harfa na vodi: waleške pravljicne pripovedi*, Ljubljana, 1980.

(Adapted from the translation into English by Thomas Jones and Gwyn Jones.)

⁴⁸⁴ See Appendix B for a brief discussion of the matter.

⁴⁸⁵ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 67.

This corresponds exactly to the formula used in *Pwyll* and *Branwen*, the only difference being that the formula in *Math* is in fact a double formula⁴⁸⁶ that introduces two characters at the same time, in the same manner, possibly with the intention of cross-referencing two narratives. Both *Pwyll* and *Branwen* use this formula to introduce the principal character of the tale as a whole, the character who is going to play a significant role in all episodes of the tale. *Math*, however, uses the formula to introduce a character who is highly important for the first episode (although even then, his role as *the* protagonist of the episode is arguable) and who appears only as a minor, side character in the subsequent episodes. If the first episode were to be excluded from the tale, its focus would shift significantly. As a result of that, the tale would focus on Gwydion as a fully developed, unchanging character.

Each of the three episodes has three sub-episodes, each of which has three fully developed climaxes. In the first episode, the climaxes are:

- the rape of Goewin;
- Math's punishment of Gwydion and Gilfaethwy;
- Aranrhod's failure of the virginity test.

All three climaxes are fully developed and bring the tension to the highest point possible.

The common denominator of these three climaxes is a sexual component of a non-consensual, humiliating nature.

Math son of Mathonwy was lord over Gwynedd, and Pryderi son of Pwyll was lord over twenty-one cantrefws in the south, namely the seven cantrefws of Dyfed, and the seven of Morgannwg, and the four of Ceredigion, and the three of Ystrad Tywi. (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 47)

⁴⁸⁶ I am indebted to Dr. Ian Hughes, who drew my attention to that.

The second episode presents the following three climaxes:

- the undoing of the first curse: Lleu gets a name;
- the undoing of the second curse: Lleu is armed;
- the undoing of the third curse: a wife is created for Lleu out of flowers and named Blodeuedd.

All three climaxes are fully developed, like those in the first episode. They are united by the pattern of curse and its undoing.

The climaxes of the third episode are:

- Blodeuedd asks Lleu to demonstrate how he can die;
- Gwydion punishes Blodeuedd by changing her into an owl and changing her name to Blodeuwedd;
- Lleu gets his revenge by killing Gronw.

Like the preceding six climaxes, these are also fully developed and raise the tension to its utmost. The element that unites them is death (although not always necessarily the physical death of the body).

In the nine sub-episodes of *Math*, there seem to be three types of climaxes:

- type one is connected with sexuality (rape, bestiality combined with gender crossing, failed virginity test with double childbirth, which implies sexual experience). Moreover, in all these climaxes, the sexual component is connected with a degree of violence – very explicitly in the case of Goewin's rape. The foot

maiden is raped against her will and despite putting up a fight and screaming so that “everyone in the court knew about it”:

"Kyrch, Arglwyd, a doeth am uym penn, a hynny yn diargel, ac ny buum distaw inheu. Ny bu yn y llys nys guypei. Sef a doeth, dy nyeint ueibon dy chwaer, Arglwyd, Gwydyon uab Don a Giluaethwy uab Don. A threis arnaf a orugant a chywilyd y titheu, a chyscu a wnaethpwynt genhyf, a hynny i'th ystauell ac i'th wely."⁴⁸⁷

As a form of punishment, the culprits are utterly emasculated by means of three transgender changes and incest. Gwydion and Gilfaethwy are changed into animal form three times and ordered to mate with each other and produce offspring, which implies an increased shame component of the punishment⁴⁸⁸ and enforced sexual acts. Aranrhod's failed virginity test is proof of prior sexual activity and experience, and while her denial of prior sexual activity⁴⁸⁹ does not necessarily imply that her sexual experience was in any way associated with violence, the virginity test itself was an act of violence because it abruptly terminated the gestation period of both fetuses.

- Type two is united by a repetition of the pattern of a curse and its undoing. Each time, a curse is pronounced upon Lleu by his mother, which prompts its undoing or the climax of each sub-episode in the second episode. A minor deviation from the pattern can be observed in the final sub-episode, where the curse is formulated

⁴⁸⁷ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 74.

“I was assaulted, lord, quite openly, nor did I keep quiet – everyone in the court knew about it. It was your nephews who came, lord, your sister’s sons, Gwydion son of Dôn and Gilfaethwy son of Dôn. And they forced me, and shamed *you*, and I was taken in your chamber and in your very bed.” (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 52)

⁴⁸⁸ See also Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan, “Gender and violence in the Four Branches of the Mabinogi”, Maier, Bernhard und Stefan Zimmer, unter Mitwirkung von Christiane Batke, *150 Jahre Mabinogion – deutsch-walisische Kulturbeziehungen*, Tübingen, 2001, 67-78.

⁴⁸⁹ “A uorwyn,” heb ef, “a wyt uorwyn di?” “Ni wnn i amgen no’ m bot.” (Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 77)
“Maiden,” he said, “are you a virgin?” “That is my belief.” (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 54)

in such a way that it cannot be undone by tricking Aranrhod, but only by the creation of Blodeuedd from flowers specifically for the purpose of giving Llew a wife not of the race on earth.

- Type three is connected by the theme of 'death', on two occasions in terms of ending one form of existence and entering another, and real physical death on one occasion. The first climax in the third episode is the killing of Llew by Gronw and Blodeuedd by means of deceit, which causes Llew to change his form from human to animal, disappearing into the sky in the form of an eagle. It takes Gwydion's magic to restore him back to his human form and the best physicians to nurse him back to health. In the second climax, Gwydion promises Blodeuedd he would not kill her, threatening her with something worse:

Ac yna y gordiwawd Gwydyon hitheu, ac y dywot wrthi, "Ny ladaf i di. Mi a wnaf yssyd waeth it. Sef yw hynny," heb ef, "dy ellwng yn rith ederyn. Ac o achaws y kywilyd a wnaethost ti y Lew Llaw Gyffes, na ueidych ditheu dangos dy wyneb lliw dyd byth, a hynny rac ouyn yr holl adar. A bot gelynyaeth y rynghot a'r holl adar. A bot yn anyan udunt dy uaedu; a'th amherchi, y lle i'th gaffant. Ac na cholych dy enw, namyn dy alw uyth yn Blodeuwed."
Sef yw Blodeuwed, tylluan o'r ieith yr awr honn. Ac o achaws hynny y mae digassawc yr adar y'r tylluan: ac ef a elwir etwa y dylluan yn Blodeuwed.⁴⁹⁰

By changing Blodeuedd from human form into that of an owl, Gwydion achieves two things: Blodeuedd is now feared and hated by all other birds, which deprives her of any social interaction and of the love she so craved after she fell in love with Gronw, and

⁴⁹⁰ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 91.

Then Gwydion caught up with her and said to her, "I will not kill you. I will do worse. Namely, I will release you in the form of a bird," he said. "And because of the shame you have brought upon Llew Llaw Gyffes, you will never dare show your face in daylight for fear of all the birds. And all the birds will be hostile towards you. And it shall be in their nature to strike you and molest you wherever they find you. You shall not lose your name, however, but shall always be called Blodeuwedd." *Blodeuwedd* is 'owl' in today's language. And for that reason the birds hate the owl: and the owl is still called *Blodeuwedd*. (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 63)

makes her surface only at night, which deprives her of sunlight. Given that Blodeuedd was originally created out of flowers, deprivation of sunlight makes the punishment even worse. These two climaxes do not involve actual physical death but a change of form and an end to existence in human form, albeit only temporary in Lleu's case.

A climax that would function as a single and most important climax of the tale as a whole is, as is the case with the other three tales, absent.

The exposition is well developed and thorough, establishing Math as the king and defining both his lineage and the geographical area of his rule. Pryderi is introduced in the same sentence as Math, almost as if both of them were of equal importance in the tale. The exposition also gives sufficient information about Gwydion, Gilfaethwy, and Goewin:

Sef oed yn uorwyn gyt ac ef, Goewin uerch Pebin o Dol Pebin yn Aruon. A honno teccaf morwyn oed yn y hoes o'r a wydit yno. Ac ynteu yg Kaer Dathyl yn Aruon yd oed y wastatrwyd. Ac ny allei gylchu y wlat, namyn Giluathwy uab Don, [a Gwydyon] uab Don, y nyeint ueibon y chwaer, a'r teulu gyt ac wy y gylchu y wlat drostaw.⁴⁹¹

The exposition of the second episode is very brief and relies on the first episode to provide the details about the characters and their circumstances. The exposition of the third episode in turn relies on both preceding episodes for such detail, yet regardless of the intense interconnection between the second and the third episode, each of the three episodes is highly independent.

⁴⁹¹ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 67.

The maiden who was with him was Goewin daughter of Pebin from Dol Pebin in Arfon. And she was the fairest maiden of her generation known at the time. Math found peace at Caer Dathyl in Arfon. He was unable to circuit the land, but Gilfaethwy son of Dôn and Gwydion son of Dôn, his nephews, sons of his sister, together with the retinue would circuit the land on his behalf. (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 47)

The dénouement of the first episode is rather satisfactory because it provides almost all information the reader requires. The old foot maiden, Goewin, is recompensed; the candidate for the new foot maiden, Aranrhod, escapes in shame. The fate of one of her sons, Dylan, is briefly described, while her other child, who remains nameless in the first episode, is hidden by Gwydion before anyone else really notices him. The only information not provided is whom Math takes as a new foot maiden. The dénouement of the second episode is equally satisfactory in that Lleu is provided for in every way possible, except perhaps with an heir. After obtaining a name, weapons and a wife, he is given a territory where he rules successfully. The dénouement of the third episode, which is at the same time the dénouement of the tale as a whole, is very rapid, complete, and in a way partly imitates the dénouement of the second episode:

Ynteu Llew Llaw Gyffes a oreskynnwys eilweith y wlat, ac y gwledychwys yn llwydanhys. A herwyd y dyweit y kyuarwydyt, ef a uu arglwyd wedy hynny ar Wyned. Ac yuelly y teruyna y geing honn o'r Mabinogi.⁴⁹²

As at the end of the second episode, Lleu rules successfully over his territory; since this time, however, he does not have a wife, the question of him begetting an heir does not remain open since he is unmarried. The familiar formula again establishes the connection with the larger cycle of tales.

There is a single inciting moment in each episode. They seem to be united by a common theme of a strong emotion. Two of them are united by lust: in the first episode,

⁴⁹² Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 92.

Then Lleu Llaw Gyffes took possession of his land for a second time, and ruled over it prosperously. And according to the tale, he was lord over Gwynedd after that. And so ends this branch of the Mabinogi. (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 64)

it is Gilfaethwy's (unrequited) love and lust for the foot maiden that prepare the ground for the events to develop; in the third episode, Blodeuedd falls desperately and passionately in love with Gronw despite being married to Lleu. Their lust for each other prompts her to plot Lleu's death, which in turn gives rise to the events described. All three characters are consumed by physical lust which takes complete control over them. In the second episode, it is a combination of Gwydion's love for the child and Aranrhod's lack of love for him that is the catalyst for action. This, unlike the emotion that unites the other two inciting moments, is a positive emotion.

As in *Manawydan*, in *Math* there seems to be a great concern with 'three': three parts of the brothers' punishment for raping Goewin, three offspring of their incest, three Curses and their undoings, three characters subjected to a temporary transition from human to animal form (Gilfaethwy, Gwydion, Lleu), three transitions from human to animal form as a form of punishment (Gilfaethwy, Gwydion, Blodeuedd), three equivalents of death (Lleu's change into an eagle,⁴⁹³ Gronw's killing and Blodeuedd's change into an owl⁴⁹⁴).

The structure of *Math* as rendered by the graph is highly symmetrical and organized. It is very similar to that of *Pwyll*. In both of these tales, there is an extremely careful division into three sub-episodes per main episode. That can hardly be a coincidence. The tripartite structure, which is evident in all four texts, seems to be a

⁴⁹³ Because the intention behind Blodeuedd's betrayal was death.

⁴⁹⁴ Because Gwydion has no intention of ever reversing the magic, which is evident from his statement that he would do that to her which is worse than killing; also because it is the end of Blodeuedd's short existence in the form of a human being.

deliberate attempt at unification of the Four Branches and an attempt at making all four of them part of a larger literary system to which they might not have belonged before the editing took place. There is also an alarming similarity between *Branwen* and *Manawydan*. Both tales show a careful and deliberate division into three parts; the dividing line between the two tales is deliberately blurred by the 'link' at the beginning of *Manawydan*. A comparison of all four tales yields two groups with very symmetrical structures: *Pwyll* and *Math*, almost identical with each other, are the examples of almost perfect structural balance and symmetry, as opposed to *Branwen* and *Manawydan*, which are with all their structural flaws almost perfect mirror images of each other. All four texts seem to display a fairly successful integration of episodes into relatively coherent texts that are all part of a larger literary cycle.

IV.5.2 The plot line structure of the selected Irish narratives

IV.5.2.1 *Compert Con Culainn*

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Mark on the horizontal axis	Event
A Exposition U-Version	Conchobor is at Emain Macha with the chieftains of the Ulaid. A flock of birds frequents the plain and grazes there.
B Inciting moment	The plain is bare because the birds have grazed until no vegetation remained. The Ulaid are distressed.
C	The Ulaid set out with chariots to drive away the birds. Conchobor and his daughter Deichtine share a chariot. The flock of birds flies over Slíab Fúait.
D	The birds fly towards Bruig na Boinde. Night overcomes the Ulaid, snow falls, and Conchobor sends his men to find shelter. Conall and Bricriu find a house, but Bricriu thinks it is too poor to accommodate the Ulaid. The men go to the house regardless and are made welcome.
E	The wife of the man of the house is in labour. Deichtine helps her. A boy is born and Deichtine nurses him. The Ulaid give him two foals that were born on the same night.
F	The Ulaid find themselves east of the Bruig; there is nothing there anymore. They return to Emain Macha. Deichtine continues to nurse the baby until he grows into a young lad.
G	To Deichtine's great sadness, the boy dies of an illness. Thirsty, she drinks from a copper vessel. Each time she attempts to drink, something small leaps towards her lips, yet she can see nothing

	when she removes the copper vessel from her mouth.
H	Deichtine has a dream in which a man, Lug mac Ethnenn, tells her that she is pregnant by him and that she will bear a son, who is to be named Sétantae. Deichtine gets pregnant. The Ulaid think Conchobor is the father, because Deichtine used to sleep by him.
I Climax	Conchobor promises Deichtine to Súaltaim mac Róich. Embarrassed by going to a man's bed while pregnant, Deichtine crushes the child within her out of shame. Then she goes to Súaltaim, gets pregnant immediately and bears him a son.
J Corrupted ending in LU – emended from TCD H. 4. 22, RIA 23 N. 10, BM Eg. 88	Caulann takes him as a foster-child. The boy kills his hound and promises to be his master's hound instead, which is why he is then called Cú Chulainn.
K	At an assembly at Emain Macha, they dispute who should rear the boy. Conchobor suggests the boy be given to Finnchóem. She loves him like her own flesh and blood, just as she loves her son Conall Cernach.
L	The men object, each wanting to raise the boy himself. Sencha, Blái Briugu, Fergus and Amorgen all list their reasons as to why they should be the person to raise the boy. Conchobor suggests leaving the decision to Morann.
M	Morann decides that the boy should be given to Conchobor, since he is Finnchóem's kin. Other men should contribute by teaching him

	eloquence (Sencha), providing for him (Blaí Briugu), taking him on his knee (Fergus), being his foster father (Amorgen) and foster brother (Conall Cernach), while Finnchóem provides a mother's breast.
N Dénouement	They do that, Amorgen and Finnchóem take the boy and rear him at the Fort of Imbrith on the Plain of Muirthemne.

Compert Con Culainn is a single-episode story without any real sub-episodes. All the action leads to a single climax predetermined by the title (and the genre) of the tale – the birth of a hero. The text is not developed enough to provide two sub-episodes; this is evident from the quick development of the action into the climax first after Deichtine's foster-child dies of an illness and then after Deichtine terminates her first pregnancy because of shame. A separate sub-episode dedicated to the foster-child who dies, or to a prematurely terminated pregnancy, would be unlikely and redundant, since this is the birth tale of a very specific and important hero, Cú Chulainn. The events prior to the climax are not complete and motivated enough to function as embedded tales; they just provide the rising action necessary to build up to a climax. Deichtine, unlike Derdriu, Medb or Emer, is not one of the central characters of the Irish tradition, and as such does not require a separate tale relating parts of her life; she is only an essential character in the story relating Cú Chulainn's birth.

A remscél to Táin Bó Cúailnge, Compert Con Culainn is a fairly independent tale within the Ulster Cycle. In a fairly straightforward manner, it contains a single episode with a single, definitive climax. The climax is fully developed and is the result of a combination of two things: the title, which points the tale in its direction, and a rather drawn out rise in dramatic action. The very first sentence in the manuscript (LU) reads:

Compert Con Culainn in so sis.⁴⁹⁵

This sentence appears indented in the manuscript, which effectively marks the beginning of a new text, and possibly also the title of the text that is about to begin. The exposition of the story presupposes some familiarity with the main characters of the Ulster Cycle; this is evident from the small amount of information it provides about the characters involved:

Boí Conchubur & maithi Ulad i n-Emuin.⁴⁹⁶

No direct information is given about Conchobor being the king of Ulster, nor about who his noblemen were or what the role and importance of Emain Macha was. Any such knowledge is presupposed or expected.

The inciting moment, namely the destruction of the plain by the grazing birds, comes fairly early in the exposition and gives the story some momentum, but no real direction. The rise in tension is fairly steady at the beginning but slows down into a slight ‘plateau’ at the point where Deichtine nurses the boy, who later dies, for a few years until he is a young lad. The rise in tension is fairly long and the story at that point is perhaps a

⁴⁹⁵ A. G. Van Hamel, *Compert Con Culainn and Other Stories* (Dublin, 1968), 3.
The birth of Cú Chulainn here. (Translation mine.)

⁴⁹⁶ A.G. Van Hamel, *CCC*, 3.
Conchobor and the nobles of Ulster were at Emain. Thomas Kinsella (transl.), *The Táin: From the Irish Epic Táin Bó Cúailnge* (Oxford, 2002), 21.

bit vague, unclear as to what importance this foster-child has for the birth of Cú Chulainn. A fairly swift rise in tension follows and brings the action to the climax predicted by the title of the tale, namely the birth of Cú Chulainn.

After the climax, the tension falls fairly rapidly and provides a full dénouement. The dénouement provides a thorough and fairly detailed undoing of the action. It includes an incident that is presented as the subject of an independent story in its own right, namely how Cú Chulainn got his name. This functions as a successful embedded tale, but is not independent or developed enough to function as a sub-episode. The fall in action also provides details of the boy's rearing and education, specifying who was given the responsibility for each segment of his up-bringing.

The dénouement is completed with a short recap of the development of the action since the climax:

Is ed dogníth de íarom: berthi Amorgen ocus Finnchóem, co n-alt i n-Dún
Imbrith i m-Mag Murthemni.⁴⁹⁷

While not a strictly rigid formula like the one used in the Welsh material, this ending is nevertheless typical of many tale endings of the Irish tradition. The structure of the tale, as shown by the graph, is not particularly organized beyond the basic pattern of exposition, climax and dénouement. Between the exposition and the climax, there are areas where the transition between events is not entirely smooth. The tale functions well as a small part of an enormous cycle, yet when isolated, it presents several challenges

⁴⁹⁷ A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*, 8.

That is what was done: he was given to Amargin and Finnchaem and reared at Imrith Fort on Murthemne Plain. (Thomas Kinsella, *The Táin*, 25)

such as the lack of background information in the exposition and the inclusion of unrelated events prior to the climax. The embedded tale seamlessly introduces a shorter version of an independent tale from the same cycle into the narrative.

IV.5.2.2. *Aided Óenfir Aífe*

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Mark on the horizontal axis	Event
A Exposition	Scáthach teaches Cú Chulainn the craft of arms. Aífe becomes pregnant by him.
B Inciting moment	Cú Chulainn predicts Aífe will bear him a son and pronounces <i>geis</i> -like conditions upon him.
C	The boy, at the age of seven, goes forth to seek his father.
D	Seen by the men of Ulster, he shoots at sea birds and performs his palate trick. Conchobor orders that one of the men go and meet him and prevent the boy from coming to land. First Condere, then Conall, do so and fail to elicit the boy's name. The boy mocks the host of Ulster.
E	Cú Chulainn makes a move towards the boy. Emer warns Cú Chulainn not to kill the boy, since he must be his own son. Cú Chulainn refuses to heed Emer's words. The boy and Cú Chulainn brag and tease each other. The fight begins; they wrestle, then fight in the sea.
F Climax	Cú Chulainn uses the <i>gáe bulga</i> and mortally wounds the boy. Cú Chulainn recognizes the boy as his son. He carries the boy down to the Ulstermen and introduces him to the famous men.
G Dénouement	The boy dies and is lamented. His grave is made.

The graph of *Aided Óenfir Aífe* shows a single-episode story with a very basic, uncomplicated curve developing from the exposition into the climax and then very quickly into the dénouement. There are no sub-episodes in this story and no parts that

could be viewed as redundant. The embedded tale of the birth of Aífe's only son is a necessary component part of the tale relating his death. The exposition is not overly long, but it nevertheless provides all the background information regarding Connla's parents, the circumstances of his conception, a brief note regarding Cú Chulainn's activities at the time of the conception, the taboo he imposes upon his unborn son and the boy's age when he sets off to seek his father. Some basic knowledge about Cú Chulainn is presupposed or implied due to the tale belonging to the Ulster Cycle.

Compared with *Compert Con Culainn*, the exposition of *Aided Óenfir Aífe* provides more information that is vital to the story and does so in a very organized and systematic fashion. The exposition includes an embedded tale, which also contains the inciting moment, namely the taboo that Cú Chulainn imposes upon the unborn child. The rise in tension is steady throughout the story and leads to a single fully developed climax, predicted by the title of the story at the beginning. The development of the story is, because of its title, fairly predictable. The direction of the story is very clearly set by the title and by the opening sentence:

Aided Óenfir Aífe and so. Cía fochann araro marb Cú Chulainn a mac? Ní hansae.⁴⁹⁸

The typical Old Irish pattern of a question paired with the formulaic answer of 'Ní hansae' effectively kick-starts the exposition that reveals the most important facts of the story: it identifies the character on whom the focus is set as Aífe's only son; his fate, which is death; the person who causes his death, namely Cú Chulainn; and the

⁴⁹⁸ A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*, II.

This is the death of Aífe's only son. What was the cause for which Cú Chulainn slew his son? Not hard to tell. (Translation mine.)

relationship between the two of them, which is that of father and son. The build-up to the climax is very thorough and causes the tension to rise very steadily with every word or blow exchanged between the men. The fall in action and the dénouement are very quick and almost too abrupt:

Ro l   tra a g  ir gubai 7 a fert 7 a liae ocus co cend tr   tr  th n  con reilcthea lo  g
die mbuaib la hU  ltu ina diad.⁴⁹⁹

This ending follows immediately upon the climax, yet is in its contents entirely complete in that it provides the information about the boy's grave and the way the men of Ulster lamented him.

Generally speaking, a comparison between the graphs of *Compert Con Culainn* and *Aided   enfir Aife* shows that the progression of the story in *Aided   enfir Aife* is smoother and better organized than that of *Compert Con Culainn*. This is due to the inclusion of not entirely relevant material into *Compert Con Culainn*, which is at the same time incorporated in rather a forced manner.

⁴⁹⁹ A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*, 15.

Cries of grief were raised, and his grave and marker were made, and for three days not a calf of the cattle of the Ulaid was left alive after him. (Jeffrey Gantz, *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, 152)

IV.5.2.3 *Tochmarc Emire*

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Mark on the horizontal axis	Event
A Exposition	Conchobor reigns over Emain Macha. The Ulstermen drink from Iarngúalae with Conchobor and perform feats.
B Inciting moment	The men of Ulster take counsel regarding Cú Chulainn because he is as yet unwed and they are worried he might take advantage of his beauty and fame to gain the love of their wives.
C	Conchobor sends out nine men to search for a suitable maiden, whom Cú Chulainn might consent to woo, in each province of Ireland for a year. The men return and report they have not had any luck finding such a maiden. Cú Chulainn himself goes to woo Emer, the daughter of Forgall, in Luglochta Loga. He sets off with his charioteer Lóeg.
D	Cú Chulainn finds the maiden in her playing field with her foster sisters sitting with her and learning needlework from her. Cú Chulainn reaches the maidens and is recognized by Emer. Cú Chulainn and Emer converse; she asks him where he has come from, where he slept, what kind of food he had, which way he came, which way he took after that. He asks Emer to give him her account. He asks her for the names of the champions who follow her, and why he himself is not reckoned with the men she has named. She asks him what his strength is and claims that he has not yet reached the full strength of chariot-chiefs. She asks about his upbringing, then he inquires about her upbringing. Cú Chulainn, pleased with the conversation, suggests they should

	<p>become one. Emer enquires if Cú Chulainn be married already. She reveals to Cú Chulainn that she may not marry until Fíal, who is older than Emer, has been married. Cú Chulainn declines Fíal on account of not being in love with her, and on account of the rumours that Fíal is not a virgin. During the conversation, Cú Chulainn notices Emer's breasts and pays her a compliment;⁵⁰⁰ the maiden replies, setting him his first task (of slaying a hundred on each ford from the Ford of Scennemenn at Olbine to Banchuing Arcait). Cú Chulainn repeats the compliment and Emer sets him a second task, namely that of slaying three times nine men with a single blow (so as to preserve a man in the midst of each nine of them). Cú Chulainn repeats the compliment for the third time and she sets him another task, this time of meeting Benn Suain the son of Roscmelc, from the end of summer to the beginning of spring, from the beginning of spring to May-day, from May-day to the beginning of winter. Cú Chulainn and Emer establish that they have an agreement. Emer asks Cú Chulainn what the account of him is and what his name is and he replies in an indirect manner. Cú Chulainn leaves and they do not converse any more.</p>
E	<p>Driving away, Lógé inquires what the conversation between Emer and Cú Chulainn meant; Cú Chulainn tells Lógé that he is wooing Emer and explains to him why Emer and he disguised their words when conversing. Cú Chulainn explains why he replied with Intide Emna</p>

⁵⁰⁰ "Cain an mag so, mag alcuing." Van Hamel, CCC, 31. "Fair is the plain, the plain of the noble yoke." Tom Peete Cross and Clark Harris Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales* (New York, 1996), 160.

	<p>when asked whence he came from; he provides an onomastic explanation of the name. He explains his answer regarding the man in whose house he had slept, the ruin of a chariot, the reference to the two mountains he mentioned in reply to which way he had come, the answer he gave Emer when she asked which way he had taken afterwards, the account of himself he had given Emer, the name he said he had, what he meant when he paid Emer the compliment, what Emer meant when she set him the tasks. Cú Chulainn continues driving and spends the night in Emain Macha.</p>
F	<p>The lords of the land hear about Cú Chulainn's visit and his conversation with Emer from their daughters. Forgall is informed. He reveals his intention to hinder Cú Chulainn and Emer from getting what they want. He sets out for Emain Macha in the clothes of a foreigner. He is welcomed warmly. On the third day, he sends his men away; Cú Chulainn, Conall and other chariot chiefs are praised to him, and he advises Cú Chulainn to go to Alba to learn soldierly feats from Scáthach, with the intention that he might not return. Cú Chulainn agrees to go, whereupon Forgall promises to give him anything he requests. Forgall returns home. Cú Chulainn and the warriors set themselves to do what they vowed. Cú Chulainn (with Lóegaire, Conchobor and Conall) goes to Bray and speaks to Emer before he boards ship. Emer explains to Cú Chulainn who it was who enticed him to go to Alba, and why. She also warns him, and they promise</p>

	chastity to each other.
G	<p>Cú Chulainn makes for Alba. Dornolla, daughter of Domnall, falls in love with Cú Chulainn. Cú Chulainn refuses to lie with her, and she swears revenge: that he should have no true knowledge of what was taught until he went to Scáthach. With his three companions, he goes across Alba. Emain Macha appears to them. Conchobor, Conall and Lóegaire cannot go past it. This is a deed on the part of Dornolla to separate Cú Chulainn from his companions; other versions say the deed was on the part of Forgall. Cú Chulainn continues the journey on his own on an unknown road, sad, gloomy and weary, having promised not to return to Emain Macha unless he has found Scáthach, or died. Realizing he is astray and ignorant, he lingers and notices a great lion-like beast coming towards him; the beast keeps in front of him and exposes its flank to him. Cú Chulainn jumps on the beast's neck and lets the beast carry him wherever it likes for four days. They arrive at a spot where boys are rowing on a loch. They laugh as they see the dangerous beast in service of a man. Cú Chulainn leaps off and blesses the beast. He comes to a large house, meets a maiden and is made welcome; the maiden greets him by name. The maiden tells him they were both foster children to Ulbeccan Sexa, and gives him food and drink. Cú Chulainn meets a brave youth who gives the same welcome to him and tells Cú Chulainn how to get to the dún of Scáthach, giving him instructions to help him find the right way. Cú Chulainn goes</p>

	<p>across the plain and further. He goes across the glen across terrible districts and passes all the monsters sent by Forgall to destroy him. The youth teaches Cú Chulainn how to win honour in the house of Scáthach and foretells the trouble Cú Chulainn will suffer in the cattle raid of Cúailnge. Arriving at the camp where Scáthach's scholars are, he is directed to Scáthach; to reach her, he has to cross the bridge that no one can cross until he has achieved valour. After three unsuccessful attempts, he jumps on the head of the bridge, performs the hero's salmon leap and throws himself over the other head of the bridge that has not been fully raised yet. He goes to the dún and puts his spear through the door. Scáthach, upon being told about that, sends her daughter, Uathach, to find out who it is. The maiden likes him immediately. She and Scáthach agree that Scáthach should be the first to sleep with Cú Chulainn. The maiden serves Cú Chulainn in the shape of a servant; he breaks her finger. Violence ensues. Cochar Cruifne and Cú Chulainn fight until Cochar Cruifne's death; Scáthach is sorrowful at that. Cú Chulainn promises to take upon himself the services of the dead man. Cú Chulainn and Uathach converse and she advises him what he should do to fulfil the purpose of his visit. Cú Chulainn follows her advice and pledges Scáthach to grant him the three wishes. (Other versions say that he took her to the shore and slept with her, upon which she gave him the prophecy of what was to befall him.) Uathach sleeps with Cú Chulainn and Scáthach teaches him the</p>
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	skill of arms.
H	<p>Meanwhile, Lugaid, Cú Chulainn's foster brother goes eastward with twelve men to woo twelve maidens of Mac Rossa. Forgall reveals to Lugaid that the most desirable maiden, Emer, is unmarried and living with him, whereupon Forgall betroths the two, and the twelve maidens of the Bray underlords to the twelve men who were with Lugaid. When Lugaid is brought to the dún for the wedding, Emer reveals to him why she cannot marry him; he returns home.</p>
I	<p>At the same time, Scáthach is at war with the tribes of princess Aífe; the two hosts assemble to fight. Cú Chulainn is put in bonds and given a sleeping potion by Scáthach to prevent him from going into the battle in case something happens to him; the sleeping potion, however, does not affect him as it should, so after an hour's sleep, he is on the battle-field where he single-handedly kills three of Aífe's warriors. The next morning, in another battle, the two sons of Scáthach prepare to fight against the three sons of Esse Enchinde. Scáthach is uneasy at that because the fight is not equal in numbers, and because Aífe is the hardest warrior-woman in the world. Cú Chulainn interferes and kills the three enemy warriors. Aífe challenges Scáthach to combat; Cú Chulainn, ready to take on even Aífe herself, inquires what it is that she cherishes the most. In combat, Cú Chulainn's sword is shattered by Aífe; he tricks her into believing that her three most treasured possessions, that is, her horses and chariot, have fallen down the glen</p>

	and perished, which allows him to overcome her.
J	<p>Aífe offers to trade him life for life; he requests three wishes to be granted to him, namely that Aífe give hostages to Scáthach and never oppose her again, that she sleep with him and that she bear him a son. His wishes are granted. Aífe is pregnant and she says she will send the unborn child to Ireland when he is seven years old. Cú Chulainn names the boy Connla and imposes <i>geis</i>-like conditions upon him. Cú Chulainn encounters the mother of the last three warriors whom he killed, and she attempts to kill him in revenge, unsuccessfully. Scáthach receives hostages from Aífe and Cú Chulainn rests for three days to recover. Scáthach teaches Cú Chulainn the arts of arms. A message comes for Cú Chulainn to return to his own land; Scáthach tells him what will happen in his future. He leaves for Ireland.</p>
K	<p>On the way to the house of Rúad, Cú Chulainn rescues the daughter of Rúad who is waiting to be taken as tribute to the Fomori. He leaves without giving her his name.</p> <p>The maiden returns to the dún and Cú Chulainn arrives there later as though he were an ordinary guest. Every man boasts of killing the three Fomori, yet the maiden does not believe them and is convinced she would recognize her saviour. When she identifies Cú Chulainn as her saviour, her father offers her to him; Cú Chulainn asks for the maiden to come to Ireland in a year's time, and makes for Emain.</p>
L	After the year has passed, he and Lóeg prepare to meet the maiden.

	<p>Realizing that they did not arrange the venue, they decide to go to the border of the land. On the shore of Loch Cuan, they see two birds on the sea and aim stones at them from their slings, hitting the birds. The birds turn out to be the daughter of Rúad and her handmaiden. Cú Chulainn sucks a stone out of the maiden's head, tasting her blood; because of that, he gives the maiden to his companion.</p>
M	<p>Cú Chulainn prepares the scythe chariot and arrives at Forgall's house. He leaps the hero's salmon leap and deals three blows on the liss so that eight men fall from each group, leaving the man in the middle to escape. The three men who escaped were Emer's brothers. Forgall is killed.</p>
N Climax	<p>Cú Chulainn takes Emer and her two foster sisters, and two loads of silver and gold; cries are raised and Cú Chulainn kills Scennmend, who attacked him. The first task is fulfilled.</p> <p>Coming to Glondath, Cú Chulainn kills a hundred men. The second task is fulfilled.</p> <p>Cú Chulainn kills a hundred men on each ford of Áth Scennmend; the third task is fulfilled. Emer is brought into the Red Branch and welcomed.</p>
O	<p>Bricriu remarks that Cú Chulainn will be dissatisfied because Conchobor has the right to sleep with Emer first. Cú Chulainn reacts violently. Conchobor suggests that Cú Chulainn go and bring him the herds from Slíab Fúait. After Cú Chulainn's anger is soothed, it is</p>

	agreed that Emer should sleep with Conchobor first, as is the king's right and ordinance, with Cathbad and Fergus in the same bed as them watching over Cú Chulainn's honour.
P Dénouement	Emer's wedding gift and Cú Chulainn's honour price are paid by Conchobor. Cú Chulainn and Emer do not separate until their death. The chieftaincy of the youths of Ulster is given to Cú Chulainn. A list of the names of the youths in Emain Macha in that time follows.

The graph of *Tochmarc Emire* shows a single episode with a single climax. All action leads to this climax, which means there are no real sub-episodes. The story has a number of embedded tales (twelve), most of which are extended onomastic tales. Several of them seem to have been added by the scribe at some point during the copying process. Discussing his edition of the text, Van Hamel discusses the fragmentary nature of Version I and talks about the nature of Version III (which is a combination of the fragments of Version I and a hypothetical version II that has not been preserved):

Version III differs from Version I not so much in the beginning as at the end, where entirely new materials were inserted (for instance, the story of the daughter of Ruad); also in the intermediate portion, where Cú Chulainn gives the explanation of his enigmatical conversation with Emer, there must be a considerable number of additions.⁵⁰¹

This shows that considerable editing must have been involved, but with the purpose of adding material in order to preserve it and enhance the story in terms of rhetoric rather than to improve its structure. In fact, the graph shows that editing in this case weakened

⁵⁰¹ Van Hamel, *CCC*, 16.

the structure and added to its flaws rather than strengthening it. This is obvious from the lengthy ‘plateau’ areas, which correspond to where the extra material was introduced.

The exposition begins in a formulaic fashion:

[b]aí rí amrae aireгдаe i nEmain Macha fecht n-aill .i. Conchobur mac Fachtnai Fáthaig. Baí már de amru ina flaith la hUltu. Baí sídh 7 sáime 7 subaige. [...] ⁵⁰²

The exposition is unusually long, made so by several lists and descriptions. The inciting moment, namely the men of Ulster taking counsel about Cú Chulainn’s unmarried state and the decision that he must marry, reinforces the title at the beginning of the tale (“Incipit tochmarc Emire”⁵⁰³) and gives the tale its direction. The inciting moment instigates a rise in tension, however the tension stalls considerably because of the coded conversation exchanged between Cú Chulainn and Emer and because of the lengthy explanation of what that conversation meant, with several onomastic and embedded tales, that Cú Chulainn offers Lóeg. The ‘plateau’ area accounts for a considerable amount of the text where the reader’s attention is only commanded by the intricacies of the interpretation of the previous conversation as Cú Chulainn presents it to Lóeg. Cú Chulainn’s decision to go to Alba, functionally an active step on the way to winning the hand of his chosen woman, causes the tension to rise again, only to be followed by another ‘plateau’ area containing more embedded stories such as the one relating the unrequited love of Domnall’s daughter for him, the story of the lion, the story about the

⁵⁰² Van Hamel, *CCC*, 20.

There lived once upon a time a great and famous king in Emain Macha, whose name was Conchobar, son of Fachtna Fathach. In his reign there was much store of good things enjoyed by the men of Ulster. Peace there was, and quiet and pleasant greeting; [...] (Tom Peete Cross and Clark Harris Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 153)

⁵⁰³ Van Hamel, *CCC*, 20.

youth who teaches him how to cross the Plain of Ill Luck and the story of Lugaid's unsuccessful wooing. The tension rises again when Cú Chulainn finally arrives at Scáthach's home, but stalls significantly while Cú Chulainn's role in the war between Scáthach and Aífe is presented as yet another embedded story. Another embedded story follows, namely the one about Rúad's daughter, which prevents the tension from rising until the time when Cú Chulainn's journey home is no longer interrupted by further embedded stories. The events and the fighting at Forgall's court then facilitate a proper, steady rise in tension. This tension culminates in a proper, fully developed climax when Cú Chulainn takes Emer from the court to Emain Macha to take her as his wife. After reaching its highest point, the tension falls rapidly as the action resolves and the dénouement that follows is complete in that it offers all the necessary details regarding the wedding and Cú Chulainn's honour price.

The curve of the graph with its plateau areas indicates that the structure of the narrative is not as tightly woven as a simple narrative might demand. The editing contributed to a certain degree of stalled tension, which in turn prevented the climax from developing in an uncomplicated and straight-forward fashion evident in, for example, *Aided Óenfir Aífe*, *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó* and to a degree in *Compert Con Culainn*. It seems that the redactor did not put a great deal of effort into the organizing of the material into a structural masterpiece, but was more concerned with adding extra material to preserve it and to emphasize the enormousness and richness of the Ulster Cycle, thus creating a rich and complicated tale demanding intense concentration on the part of the reader.

IV.5.2.4 Mesca Ulad

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Mark on the horizontal axis	Event
A Exposition	Ireland is under Amorgen Glúnmár, a king's poet and a king's judge, and is divided into two parts, the part under the ground belonging to the Túatha Dé Dannan (who went into the hills, the regions of the Síde), the other part to the sons of Mil Espáne. In each province of Ireland, the Túatha Dé Danann left five of their number to provoke combat, battle, strife and slaughter. In the province of the Ulaid, they left five of their men who promoted the feeling of unhappiness with the division of the province into three parts. The province was shared between Conchobor, Cú Chulainn and Findtan.
B Inciting moment	Conchobor holds a feast at Samuin at Emain Macha. He plans to send Leborcham to Cú Chulainn and Finchad Fer Bend Uma son of Fróeglethan to Findtan. Leborcham delivers the message to Cú Chulainn, who is at the time giving a feast for his own people and is therefore not keen to go. Following the advice of Emer Foltchain daughter of Forgall Manach, however, he decides to go.
C	Cú Chulainn arrives and is welcomed by Sencha son of Ailill in a very elaborate manner. Cú Chulainn deduces from the greeting that Sencha son of Ailill is asking for a present and asks him to name the present. Sencha names

	<p>his guarantors; Cú Chulainn names his guarantors for a counter-present in return. Sencha asks for the present: for Cú Chulainn to give his third of the territory of the Ulaid to Conchobor for a year. Cú Chulainn agrees to it.</p>
D	<p>Findtan arrives and is greeted by the druid Cathbad in a similarly elaborate way.</p> <p>Like Cú Chulainn, Findtan realizes that a present is being asked of him, and promises to give it. Cathbad names his guarantors; Findtan names his guarantors. Conchobor is now the king of the Ulaid.</p>
E	<p>Cú Chulainn issues his counter-request, namely that Conchobor come to drink and feast with him, whereupon Findtan asks for guarantors and assurances. The guarantors of all parties step forward and a savage and fierce fight ensues. Sencha makes peace among the heroes and promises to Cú Chulainn not to interfere at the end of Conchobor's year as king. Everybody remains peaceful and stays for a three-day feast that Conchobor has prepared.</p>
F	<p>At the end of the year of Conchobor's reign, the province is well-off. Emer suggests that Cú Chulainn invite Conchobor to a feast, since he will be king forever. Both Cú Chulainn and Findtan simultaneously set off to invite Conchobor to their respective feasts. Cú Chulainn arrives first and issues his invitation first; Findtan asks for guarantees and assurances. A savage fight ensues in which Sencha does not dare to intervene as promised a year ago. Conchobor and his son Furbude</p>

	<p>leave the royal house and the fighting men. Conchobor advises Furbude he should make peace among the Ulstermen by lamenting and weeping before Cú Chulainn, his foster father, who would consider him. Furbude intervenes as instructed by Conchobor; both Cú Chulainn and Findtan insist on not being contravened since they gave their oaths a year ago. Sencha suggests spending the first half of the night with Findtan and the second night with Cú Chulainn.</p>
G	<p>Conchobor invites the people of the province to Findtan's feast; the company makes for Findtan's residence and enjoy the feast. At midnight, Cú Chulainn announces it is time to move on to his feast. The Ulstermen rise and begin the journey.</p>
H	<p>Conchobor says he does not recognize the route they are taking. Bricriu believes they are no longer in the province of the Ulaid. Conchobor sends Cú Chulainn to find out where they are. Cú Chulainn and Lóeg go to investigate and Cú Chulainn declares that he knows where they are. Snow falls on the Ulstermen; they erect strong columns for the protection of their horses. Cú Chulainn offers to show the way out of the territory they are in and is accused of cowardice. The men suggest spending a day and a night in the territory to save face and protect their fame, and they make for Temuir Lúachra, where there are dwellings and buildings and where they intend to spend the night.</p>
I	<p>They find Temuir Lúachra uninhabited because everyone is celebrating</p>

	<p>the first month of Ailill and Medb's son Mane Mó Epir; two druids, Cromm Deróil and Cromm Darail, are keeping watch during the celebration. While keeping watch, Cromm Deróil and Cromm Darail see something. Cromm Deróil suggests that what they see is an armoured host; the two druids disagree for a while. Cromm Deróil recites a poem describing what he sees. Cromm Darail recites another poem further describing what he sees. Cú Rói hears the two druids' discussion; Cromm Deróil recites a third poem and asks Cú Rói for his opinion. Cú Rói replies by reciting a poem that confirms Cromm Deróil's words.</p>
J	<p>The Ulaid advance and cause fearful destruction. Cromm Deróil informs Ailill, Medb and Cú Rói of the events. He describes the troops one by one, while Cú Rói identifies the men from the druid's descriptions.</p>
K	<p>Medb establishes that the intruders are indeed the Ulstermen; she wonders if their coming has been predicted or prophesied. Cú Rói suggests asking the ancient of Cland Dedad, Gabalglinde son of Dedad, who is blind and has been cared for in the fort for thirty years. Gabalglinde explains the provision concerning the coming of the Ulstermen (an iron house, with two wooden houses around it, a house of earth underneath and a sturdy iron slab on top; dead wood and fuel underneath, iron chains and seven pillars on the green outside).</p>
L	<p>Cú Rói and Medb decide to send someone to welcome the Ulstermen;</p>

	<p>the Ulstermen are welcomed and the greeting is received by Sencha, which means the Ulstermen have come in peace. Sencha explains how the Ulstermen come to be there. A feast is prepared, with entertainment. The best warrior is asked to choose a house; Sencha decides it should be Cú Chulainn who chooses the house. Cú Chulainn chooses the largest house, which is the iron house with the two wooden houses about it.</p>
<p>M LL version ends here</p>	<p>After the feast, the servants leave for the night, locking the door after them; the chains are bound around the house and fastened about the pillars; the fire is lit and kindled from below and from above. The host outside sends up a shout; Bricriu notices the heat and alerts the Ulstermen to it. The door does not open when tried. Bricriu accuses Cú Chulainn of leading them to the enemy. Cú Chulainn says he will perform a feat to set them all free; by a thrust of his sword, he discovers there is an iron house between two houses of wood.</p>
<p>L1 LU version starts here. This part of the narrative is roughly parallel with the last part</p>	<p>[Presumably there is a conversation taking place among the Ulstermen at this point, possibly regarding which one of them should go to the yard.]</p> <p>All the men volunteer to go to the courtyard; Sencha chooses Cú Chulainn. Cú Chulainn leads the men to the courtyard; he leaps onto the top of the courtyard and upon the bridge. The Ulstermen are taken into an oak house with a vaulted roof and thick door.</p>

of the narrative of LL.	
M1	<p>The Ulstermen are made comfortable and given food and drink until they are intoxicated. Sencha calls for a blessing to the sovereign to whom they have come; Dubthach Dóeltenga swears that only what birds can carry will return to their land and that the men of Ireland and Alba will inhabit their land, take their women and chattels and kill their children.</p> <p>Dubthach Dóeltenga points out how strong the door is and that they cannot leave. Cú Chulainn does the hero's salmon leap through the roof of the house and sees the host in the courtyard preparing to attack. Ailill and his seven sons are attempting to protect the Ulstermen in the house. Cú Chulainn, upon returning, kicks the door twice; the doorframe falls into the hearth. He advises the Ulstermen to put their backs to the walls, have their weapons ready, and choose one man to speak with the enemies. Triscoth volunteers to speak, saying that any enemies he stares at will die.</p>
N1 Climax	<p>Three men, each accompanied by nine men, come into the house; Triscoth kills them. The Ulstermen overturn the house so that it falls upon three hundred of the host; the fighting begins. Ailill, watching from his dwelling, extols the battle-prowess of the Ulstermen, saying</p>

	<p>that fighting them would violate his honour. Cú Chulainn attacks three times; Furbude, also fighting, is not being attacked because of his beauty. The Ulstermen pillage and plunder the fort but spare Ailill and his seven sons since none of them fight against them.</p>
O1	<p>Crumthand Níad Náir escapes to Lemuin to his foster mother, Riches, the female satirist; she wants to avenge her son who died in the fighting, and promises to help Crumthand Níad Náir slay Cú Chulainn. Riches follows the host, finds Cú Chulainn and strips before him. Cú Chulainn turns his face to the ground so that he might not see her nakedness; Riches calls out to Crumthand Níad Náir to kill Cú Chulainn. Cú Chulainn, warned by Lóeg, refuses to rise while there is a naked woman in front of him; Lóeg kills Riches by hurling a stone from the chariot at her. Cú Chulainn fights Crumthand Níad Náir, taking his head and his gear. Cú Chulainn and Lóeg follow the host until they reach Cú Chulainn's fort.</p> <p>Cú Chulainn entertains the Ulstermen for forty days and forty nights.</p>
P1 Dénouement	<p>Ailill comes north for a visit and is given valuable gifts; then he returns to his own land. Peace and harmony exist between him and the Ulstermen.</p> <p>Conchobor rules as king for the rest of his life.</p>

Mesca Ulad is a very complex tale to analyse. Since the tale has not been preserved in its entirety in a single manuscript, J. Carmichael Watson's edition combines the texts of two manuscripts, namely those of LU and LL. The first part of the narrative is preserved in LL and is later than the second part, which is preserved in LU. The two manuscripts are independent, and there are certain differences between the two narratives that prevent them from being joined into one uniform narrative. Such differences, on the level of narrative, are certain changes in the nature of the enclosure the Ulaid find themselves in (in LL, it is an iron house, while in LU, it is a house within another house), the names of certain characters (Triscatal and Roimid in LL become Triscoth and Reorda in LU) and the identity the character who has a negative view on everything (in LL, it is Bricriu, while in LU, it is Dubthach). Some characters, such as Medb and Cú Roí, are mentioned in LL but not mentioned at all in LU. There are, of course, other stylistic and orthographic differences between the two redactions; they are, however, irrelevant to the present discussion.⁵⁰⁴ The differences on the level of narrative may stem from the editing that took place during the copying processes, different copyists and different source manuscripts. There is a significant difference in the age of the two fragments, which may also account for some of the differences.

A close reading of the two fragments shows – as observed by Thurneysen – that the two redactions overlap to a degree shortly before the break-off in one fragment and immediately after the beginning of the second fragment. While some of the facts like the ones mentioned above are different, the narrative of the second fragment seems to keep

⁵⁰⁴ For details concerning orthographic and linguistic differences, see J. Carmichael Watson (Dublin, 1941), *Mesca Ulad*, ix-xxxv.

the same direction as the narrative of the first fragment. This indicates that it is very likely that there was once a common ancestor-narrative that both of these redactions shared. There is an indication in the tale lists edited by Mac Cana⁵⁰⁵ that *Mesca Ulad* appears as a single title, denoting a single narrative, which seems to support this theory. Both Watson and Hennessy combined the two redactions in their editions in an effort to provide a narrative that would give a whole story and not just a fragment of it. The reading of the tale as presented in both editions, coupled with the scholarship available, allows the reader to follow the narrative well enough to understand the direction it takes and its outcome. It also allows the reader to accept the differences in the narrative that occur between the two fragments without letting them affect the understanding of the narrative in a way that would be too disruptive.

The graph indicates a single-episode tale, with no sub-episodes. The fact that we are dealing with two fragments of the same narrative that are different enough to make a seamless transition from one fragment to the other impossible is demonstrated by the use of two different shades of blue for the curve, and by the gap between the two parts of the curve. The exposition of the narrative (LL text) is rather lengthy and almost overly thorough. It provides a pseudo-historical account of the division of Ireland. This is effectively an embedded story, which makes the exposition rather unusual. This embedded story is fairly successfully connected with the rest of the exposition through the division of Ulster between Conchobor, Cú Chulainn and Findtan.

⁵⁰⁵ See List B, in Proinsias Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, 52.

The inciting moment follows soon after the description of the division of Ulster, and provides the direction of the narrative. The rise in action is rather slow and drawn out, with several 'plateau' areas through which the narrative slowly progresses towards what seems to be the climax. The fragment of the LL text that contains the exposition, however, unfortunately breaks off at a point which does not seem to be too far from the climax.

The beginning of the second fragment (which is found in LU) overlaps with the end of the first one, yet they are not identical or similar enough to join the two curves of the graph into one and thus connect the two parts of the narrative into a single coherent unit. The narrative of the second fragment continues the rise in the tension until the narrative reaches the climax, namely the battle between the Ulaid and the men outside the enclosure. The fall in tension is briefly stalled somewhat by the account of an attempt to avenge one of the dead warriors by his mother; after that, the narrative leads very quickly to a *dénouement* which thoroughly resolves the conflict between the Ulaid and Ailill. The second feast at Cú Chulainn's court also takes place.

IV.5.2.5 *Echtra Nerai*

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Mark on the horizontal axis	Event
A Exposition	At Samain, Ailill and Medb and their retinue are in Ráth Crúachan, cooking.
B Inciting moment	Ailill offers a prize to the man who could put a withe around the foot of one of the two dead captives that were hanged the day before.
C	Several men try unsuccessfully. Nera tries three times, without success. The captive tells Nera to put a proper peg on it.
D	The captive requests of Nera to take him on his neck so he could get a drink as he was very thirsty when he was hanged. He instructs Nera to carry him to the nearest house.
E Undeveloped climax	At the first house, Nera and the captive see a ring of fire around the house. The captive tells Nera there is no drink for them at that house. They make for the second-nearest house. At the second house, they see a lake of water around the house. The captive tells Nera there will be no drink for him at that house either; again, they make for the next house. At the third house, the captive is satisfied to take a drink. The captive spits the last sip from his lips into the faces of the inhabitants of the house and kills them.
F Dénouement	Nera carries the captive back to his torture and returns to Crúachu.
G Exposition	Nera sees that the <i>dún</i> , i.e. Crúachu, has been burnt and that there is a heap of heads cut off by the warriors from the <i>síd</i> .
H Inciting	He follows the warriors into the <i>síd</i> where the heads are shown to the

moment	king.
I	The king speaks to Nera to find out why he has come with the warriors. The king sends him to a single woman and instructs him to bring a burden of firewood every day. Nera meets the woman and takes firewood to the dún every day according to the king's instructions.
J	Nera sees two men, one blind and one lame, come out of the dún and go to a well before the dún, the blind man carrying the lame one. The woman explains to Nera that the two men visit the crown which is in the well and why they were chosen for the task.
K	Nera asks the woman to explain the adventures he had on the way to the síd. The woman instructs him to warn his people about the future destruction of Crúachu by the people of the <i>síd</i> , a vision of which has been shown to Nera. She promises that the síd will be destroyed and the crown of Briun will be carried off by Ailill and Medb. Nera takes fruits of summer out of the síd as proof that he has been there. The woman tells him she will bear him a son and instructs him to come back and take his family and cattle out of the síd before his people come to destroy it. Nera returns to his people and relates his adventures to them.
L	Nera returns to the síd to bring his family out before the síd is destroyed. He takes a burden of firewood to the dún and is told by the king that he is displeased with the woman's behaviour. Nera tends to

	<p>his cattle. The Morrígan takes Nera's son's cow to be bulled by the Donn of Cúailnge. Cú Chulainn overtakes the Morrígan and the cow and forbids the cow to be taken. Nera returns to the house; the wife chides him about the cow, and the cow appears. The woman tells him to rise and explains that the host cannot go for a year until next Samain. Nera returns to his people and gives them the warning.</p>
M	<p>Nera returns to the síd three days before Samain and brings the drove out of the síd.</p> <p>Ailill and Fergus, playing fidchell, hear the cow of Nera's son Aingen bellow three times; Fergus expresses his premonitions. The bull calf and the Findbennach meet and fight until the bull calf is beaten. Medb asks the neat-herd Buaigle what the calf bellowed. Bricriu issues an inappropriate reply and is struck by Fergus; the blow causes him lasting damage. Buaigle replies to Medb, who swears an oath.</p>
N Climax	<p>The men of Connacht destroy the síd and take the crown.</p>
O Dénouement	<p>Nera is left in the síd with his people; he has not come out yet, and never will.</p>

The structure of *Echtra Nerai* is problematic and has been discussed by several scholars including Thurneysen and Carey. Carey, in his article “Sequence and causation in *Echtra Nerai*”,⁵⁰⁶ summarizes the history of the problem:

⁵⁰⁶ John Carey, “Sequence and causation in *Echtra Nerai*”, *Ériu* XXXIX (1988), 67-74.

So perplexing and surreal are the incidents and overall structure of the tale *Echtra Nerai* (EN) that it is not surprising that scholars have sought to conquer it by division, cutting it apart into autonomous episodes and overlapping versions. Thurneysen believed the text to consist of ‘zwei Parallel-Erzählungen verschmolzen’, noting that Nera is made to warn his people of an attack from the *síd* twice, ‘wie er nun ein erstes Mal tun könnte’. Séamus Ó Duilearga went on to argue that the first episode in the story, Nera’s encounter with an animated corpse, ‘is complete in itself, and originally has nothing whatever to do with Nera’s further adventures’. He based this view on the existence of an Irish folktale closely resembling the episode in question; although it firmly established this resemblance, his treatment did not consider ways in which the first episode is echoed later in *EN* itself. That such links exist has been noted by the Rees brothers, and discussed more extensively by Alden Watson; it seems clear that, whatever its ultimate significance may be, the first episode’s foreshadowing of subsequent events is an important component of the total story.⁵⁰⁷

Thurneysen defines the end of the first episode and the beginning of the second episode at line 140 of the edition, the second episode beginning with “Erg ass tra a fecht sa,” ol in ben, “nachas fogluaisit do oic,” ol si.⁵⁰⁸

Carey argues that the language and style of the tale do not indicate any obvious difference between the two sections and suggests that the grammatical features of the tale point to a single redactor.⁵⁰⁹

[...] the proposed conflation must have been followed or accompanied by a recasting of the prose, a scenario in which the mechanical retention of ‘unskillfully combined parallel accounts’ becomes more problematical.⁵¹⁰

He further supports this by providing a summary of the tale and discussing the sequence of events in it. Patricia Ronan points out that

[t]his text seems to consist of at least three clear thematic entities, the first of which is Nerae’s encounter with the captive at Samain (lines 1 to 43). The second

⁵⁰⁷ John Carey, “Sequence”, 67.

⁵⁰⁸ Kuno Meyer, “EN”, 222. “Rise out now, lest thy warriors come,” she said. (Kuno Meyer, “EN”, 225) See Carey, “Sequence”, 67, footnote 5. Rudolf Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 312.

⁵⁰⁹ See John Carey, “Sequence”, 67-68.

⁵¹⁰ Carey, “Sequence”, 68.

is his first visit to the *síd* (lines 44 to 98), as a consequence of which his son is born. The third one is his second visit to the *síd* leading to the birth of the bull calf (lines 99 to 144) and its subsequent defeat by the Findbennach and the invasion of the *síd* by the men of Connacht (lines 145 to 195).⁵¹¹

Neither of these interpretations corresponds exactly to the results of the plot line analysis carried out for the present research project. The structure, however, is reminiscent of that of *Táin Bó Fraích*, which is another example of a text that is very easily split into two parts.

An analysis of the tension caused by the motifs of the tale yields the following observations. *Echtra Nerai* is a narrative that consists of two episodes: the first one is the episode of Nera and the captive (marked in blue on the graph), and the second one comprises Nera's adventures in the *síd* (marked in red on the graph). The break between the two episodes seems to occur much earlier in the narrative than where Thurneysen marked it, namely after Nera returns the captive to his torture and sees a heap of heads in front of the burnt dún:

Ro loisccid in dún ar a chiunn 7 connfaco cendail am-muinntiri lasna hoccu on dún.⁵¹²

Both episodes are too independent in terms of their contents to function as sub-episodes of a single-episode tale. Their independence is such that they could be separated into two loosely connected, independent tales. The first episode is also too vaguely connected with the second one to be viewed as a prolonged exposition. It provides too much information that is irrelevant to the second episode, such as the adventure with the captive, which is

⁵¹¹ Patricia Ronan, "Aspects of *Echtra Nerai*", 3.

⁵¹² Kuno Meyer, "EN", 216.

The dún was burnt before him, and he beheld a heap of heads of their people (cut off) by the warriors from the dún. (Kuno Meyer, "Echtra", 217)

the reason it is discussed as an episode in its own right in this thesis. This is supported by word *echtra* in the title, which denotes the genre the tale belongs to rather than defining the point of the tale. The alternative title, *Táin Bé Aingen*, provides the necessary direction to the second episode of the tale, but not to the first one. This is similar to *Táin Bó Fraích*, where only the second part of the narrative is actually a cattle raid.

The exposition of the first episode is fairly short and provides the temporal and geographical setting of the episode, as well as the information that the tale is dealing with the characters belonging to the Connachta rather than the Ulaid:

Bui Ailill ocus Medb aidqi samnoi hir-Raith Cruachan cona techluch huili.
Gaibtiur ar bearbad bid leu. Ro-crochta da chimed leo al-laa remiu sin.⁵¹³

The inciting moment follows immediately after this when Ailill offers a prize to the warrior who puts a withe around the foot of one of the two captives on the gallows. The unsuccessful attempts of his men begin the rise in tension, which intensifies steadily as Nera tries his luck.

The first episode contains an underdeveloped and rather unmotivated climax, namely the point where Nera and the captive are at the third house and the captive causes the death of the people in the house by spitting the last sip of water in their faces. This climax is underdeveloped partly because there is not enough material in the episode to raise the tension high enough, and partly because it is unmotivated from the contents of the episode itself. This has partly to do with the generalizing nature of the title and the

⁵¹³ Kuno Meyer, "EN", 214.

One Halloween Ailill and Medb were in Rath Cruachan with their whole household. They set about cooking food. Two captives had been hanged by them the day before. (Kuno Meyer, "EN", 215)

length of the episode. The *dénouement* of this episode is very quick and abrupt, as demonstrated by the rapid fall of the tension curve on the graph.

The second episode begins immediately upon the *dénouement* of the first episode, with no proper exposition to speak of. The second episode thus relies on the exposition of the first episode to provide any details necessary for understanding, such as the time, place and the royal house involved. The inciting moment of this episode is Nera's decision to follow the warriors into the *síd* and investigate this curious vision of the raid. From then on, the tension rises fairly steadily and reaches the highest point, i.e. the climax, when the bull calf is beaten and the cattle-raid is complete. This climax is fully developed and supported by the alternative title of the tale.

Once again, the *dénouement* is very rapid, but thorough: the men of Connacht are victorious over the warriors of the *síd* and Nera returns to the *síd* with his people to remain there forever. This *dénouement* pattern is similar not only between the two parts of the narrative, but also to the *dénouement* pattern exhibited by the other texts analysed so far. It seems that the established *dénouement* pattern of the selected Irish tales displays a very quick fall in tension and an abrupt ending of the narrative. This, however, does not necessarily mean that the ending of the narrative as a whole is unsatisfactory in any way. On the contrary, the tales discussed do not give the impression of being unfinished. Where the action is undone quickly, without extensive elaboration, the *dénouement* still provides the utmost fall in tension that is necessary to signify the end of a tale.

IV.5.2.6 *Táin Bó Fraídh*

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Mark on the horizontal axis	Event
A Exposition	Fróech is introduced, his lineage and circumstances are given. Findabair, Ailill and Medb's daughter, falls in love with him because of the stories she has heard about him.
B Inciting moment	Fróech decides to converse with Findabair. He sends a message to his mother's sister so he can have a share of gifts from the <i>síd</i> . He departs for Crúachu.
C	After being seen by the watchman, Fróech and his retinue arrive at the dún and he lets loose his dogs. They chase a number of animals.
D	The king sends word that he wants to converse with Fróech. Fróech is welcomed by Ailill and Medb. He is allocated a quarter of the house.
E	A description of the house follows. Ailill plays <i>fidchell</i> with Medb, while Fróech plays with one of his men. Ailill calls for some food for the men, but Medb wishes to play with Fróech.
F	Medb and Fróech play <i>fidchell</i> ; Fróech's harpers play for them. They are triplets Goltraiges, Gentraiges and Súantraiges, the sons of Boand.
G	Food is brought and divided. For three days and nights, Fróech and Medb play <i>fidchell</i> . Fróech allows Medb to win.
J	Medb is ashamed when she realizes that she has been playing

	<i>fidchell</i> for three days and not served any food to the visitors. Food is distributed, and three days and three nights are spent feasting.
K	Fróech is summonsed into the House of Conversation and asked about the purpose of his visit. He and his men stay for two weeks and hunt.
L	Worried that he has not had a chance to speak to the maiden yet, Fróech goes to bathe in the stream at the time when she is there with a servant. He asks her to elope with him. Findabair refuses, since elopement is inappropriate for her status, but proclaims her love for him and gives him her thumb-ring as a token of her love.
M	Ailill worries Findabair might elope with Fróech. Fróech asks for Findabair, but refuses to pay the dowry Ailill requests.
N	Ailill and Medb fear Findabair might elope with Fróech. If she did, however, they would lose status in the eyes of the kings of Ireland, which concerns them greatly. They decide to kill Fróech by tricking him: they decide to induce him to swim in a lake which contains a monster.
O	Before bathing in the river, Ailill sees that Fróech has Findabair's ring in his girdle, and throw it in the river. A salmon swallows it. Fróech catches the salmon and attempts to come out of the water. Ailill demands some rowan berries from the other bank of the river.
P	Swimming over again to get more berries, he is caught by a monster. Nobody dares hand him a sword except Findabair, who

	leaps into the water with it. Ailill throws a spear at her. Fróech throws it back at Ailill, then kills the monster.
Q	Back at the dún, Ailill and Medb repent of their plan to kill Fróech. They decide that Findabair should die for trying to help Fróech. A bath is prepared for Fróech, then he goes to bed.
R	He hears women lamenting for him. The women bring him to the síd of Crúachu where he is healed. [This suggests that in the ur-version, Fróech was killed and then resurrected by the women. The version of the tale as it is preserved seems to have lost this detail.]
S	Ailill and Medb do penance for their deeds against him, and they make peace. Fróech sends for the salmon to be brought to Findabair. Ailill demands that all his gems be brought to him, including Findabair's ring.
T	Findabair cannot produce the ring. Ailill demands she should do so, or die. The warriors say the ring is not worth that, and Fróech says he would give all his wealth, since she brought him the sword and thus saved his life. Knowing that she cannot produce the ring, Ailill insists on his demand.
U	Ailill orders Findabair to send a maid for the ring. Findabair declares that should the ring be found, she will no longer stay under Ailill's protection.
V Climax	The maid brings the dish with the salmon, with the ring on the salmon. Fróech declares he thinks he left it in his girdle, and

	demands Ailill tell him what he did with the ring. Ailill reveals that the ring belongs to him and that he knew that Findabair gave it to Fróech. Fróech says he found the ring at the entrance of the courtyard and kept it in his purse because it was valuable. At the river, he met the girl whose ring it was and she promised him her love for a year in return for the ring. He did not have the ring in his possession at the time, and he only saw the girl again when she gave him the sword in the river; after that he saw Ailill throw the ring into the water where the salmon caught it; the salmon was then caught by Fróech and given to Findabair to cook.
W Dénouement	Findabair promises herself to Fróech. Ailill and Medb request his help with the cattle raid of Cúailnge and promise that Fróech will sleep with Findabair when he returns from the east. Fróech stays until the next morning and then leaves with his men.
X Exposition; inciting moment	Fróech's mother informs him that while he was gone, his cows, his wife and three sons had been stolen. She advises him not to seek for his family and cattle and offers him her cows instead. Fróech disagrees and remembers his promise to go cattle raiding with Ailill and Medb. His mother says that he will not obtain what he seeks.
Y	Fróech sets out and goes to the men of Ulster; he meets with Conall Cernach and asks him for help. Conall predicts bad luck for Fróech, but decides to come along.
Z	Fróech and Conall travel eastwards. They reach the Alps and see a

	woman herding sheep. They ask her for help, because her mother was Irish, too. She tells them about the land they are in and that the last booty the men brought was Fróech's cows and family.
AA	Fróech is not entirely certain he can still trust his wife; the sheep-herding woman sends him and Conall to the woman who tends the cows, who is Irish and is descended from the Ulaid. She tells them of the destruction that was foretold in connection with Conall's arrival.
AB	They go to her and she tells Fróech and Conall how to get into the fort and warns them about the serpent that guards the court.
AC Climax	They attack the wall. The serpent leaps into Conall's girdle. They destroy the fort, free the woman and the three sons and plunder. Conall lets the serpent out of his girdle. They travel to the land of the Picts and get the rest of Fróech's cows.
AD	Driving the cows, a servant of Conall's dies. They throw away the cows' horns at the place that is since then called Trácht mBendchoir.
AE Dénouement	Fróech returns to his land with his wife, his sons and his cattle, and goes with Ailill and Medb on the cattle raid of Cúailnge.

As demonstrated by the graph, *Táin Bó Fraích* consists of two episodes. The first episode is by its content of a *tochmarc* type, although it is not termed such. This ‘*tochmarc*’ of Findabair is marked in blue on the graph. The second episode (marked in red on the graph) concentrates on recovering Fróech’s cattle that were stolen in his absence.⁵¹⁴

Táin Bó Fraích is structurally somewhat problematic in that the connection between the two episodes is not very strong and there are several discrepancies between them:

[t]he two parts are incongruous insofar as Fróech is expressly stated to be unmarried in part one, but as being married and having three sons in part two. There is also a difficulty about Conall Cernach in part two, whom one would expect to be with Ailill, not guarding the the [sic] Ulster border. This, together with the fact that part two is very poorly narrated, suggests that part one originally was an independent story of the *tochmarc* type to which another story about Fróech was added as a sequel in order to create a *remscél* to TBC.⁵¹⁵

In the first part, it is clearly stated at the beginning of the narrative that Fróech is unmarried. In the second part, he suddenly has not only a wife but also three sons. This is problematic for two reasons: firstly, not enough time has elapsed for Fróech to have married and begotten three sons; secondly, he is supposed to marry Findabair only after the cattle raid of Cúailnge. The fact that in the second part, Fróech’s wife is never referred to by name, and the cattle raid of Cúailnge, which should according to the first episode come before Fróech’s marriage, creates further confusion and deepens the already obvious gap between the two episodes. The whole situation gives the impression

⁵¹⁴ See also Wolfgang Meid (ed.), *Táin Bó Fraích* (Dublin, 1994), x.

⁵¹⁵ Meid, *TBF*, x-xi.

that either there is a significant chunk of the narrative missing, or that the two episodes do not actually belong to the very same tale.

The two episodes, or parts, as referred to by Meid, are almost completely independent from each other to such a degree that they could function as separate tales. Meid observes that the only link between them is the element that cross-references *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, namely the repeated promise that Fróech should take part in the cattle raid of Cúailnge.⁵¹⁶ The transition between the two parts is quite obvious and causes confusion on the part of the reader.

Neither of the two episodes contains any sub-episodes or any embedded tales; each episode has a single climax. The first episode begins with a thorough description of Fróech's circumstances: his lineage, his connection with the Otherworld, his fame and renown. The beginning is also loosely formulaic in a way similar to the formula used in *Compert Con Culainn, Aided Óenfir Aife, Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*:

Fróech mac Idaith do Chonnachtaib, mac side do Bé Find a sídib. Derbsiur side do Boind.⁵¹⁷

The exposition, compared to *Compert Con Culainn, Aided Óenfir Aife* and *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*, contains a lot of additional details. In this respect, it is more reminiscent of the exposition of *Tochmarc Emire*. The inciting moment is present fairly early on in the exposition when Fróech decides to go to converse with Findabair. The tension begins to rise with Fróech's arrival at Ailill and Medb's court, but stalls considerably while they

⁵¹⁶ Meid, *TBF*, x.

⁵¹⁷ Meid, *TBF*, 1.

Fróech son of Idath of the Connachta was the son of Bé Find of the Síde, and Bé Find was a sister of Boand. (Jeffrey Gantz, *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, 114)

play chess, the harpists play and the food is cooked by Fróech's men. There is a noticeable pattern in the development of tension until after the scene in the river. Prior to this scene, the tension changes between rising and stalling several times; following this scene, it rises steadily until it reaches the climax. The climax of the first episode (when Findabair's ring is found) is well developed and is followed by a rapid fall in tension while the details of Fróech and Findabair's union are discussed and Ailill and Medb demand Fróech's co-operation at the cattle raid of Cúailnge. The dénouement of this episode is somewhat incomplete in that it produces certain expectations in the reader, namely the expectations connected with Fróech's return, after which the reader expects him to take part in the cattle raid of Cúailnge as promised, before taking Findabair away. The fact that the action is not completely resolved is shown on the graph by the line not dropping all the way to the same level at which it started.

The second episode lacks a proper exposition, which makes it reliant on the first episode for basic background details about Fróech and his circumstances. The second episode effectively begins with an inciting moment, namely the news that Fróech's cows have been stolen and his family abducted. This, however, is the very moment when a great contradiction between the first and the second episode becomes apparent: the sudden existence of a wife and three sons. The fact that something is amiss in the narrative is reflected on the graph by the gap in the curve, where there is no joint between the blue and the red curve of each respective episode. Following the abrupt beginning of this episode, the tension rises steadily with a single exception of a relatively short 'plateau' area denoting the conversation between Fróech, Conall Cernach and the woman

from Ireland. The climax of the second episode is reached when Fróech's cattle and family have been recovered. This climax is, like the first one, fully developed; unlike the first one, however, this one is predicted by the title of the tale. The climax is followed by a rapid dénouement that completely undoes the conflict of the second episode, yet leaves the first episode not entirely resolved:

Luid Fráech ass iarum dia chrích, 7 a ben 7 a maicc 7 a baí laiss, co luid la Ailill 7 Meidb do tháin na mbó a Cúailngiu.⁵¹⁸

The problem, of course, lies in the discrepancy between Ailill's promise to marry Fróech and Findabair as soon as Fróech has returned from the cattle raid of Cúailnge at the end of the first episode, and the fact that in the second episode, Fróech already has a wife before he participates in the cattle raid of Cúailnge. For this reason, the dénouement of the narrative as a whole is not entirely satisfactory.

The title, when taken as a common title referring to the narrative as a whole, is misleading, as it is only relevant to the second episode. Meid allows the possibility that

[p]art one originally was a story of the *aided* type which was remodelled to allow the hero to participate in the great *Táin*, or perhaps that we have in TBF a contamination of an older tradition where Fróech wooed a lady, married and later rescued her from his enemies, with a later tradition in which he wooed Findabair.⁵¹⁹

The narrative demonstrates that in the case of *Táin Bó Fraích*, the amount of editing involved (if any editing was indeed involved) was not applied with the intention of making the narrative coherent and convincing. The gap between the two episodes, which

⁵¹⁸ Meid, *Táin*, 16.

Fróech returned to his own land, then, with his wife and his three sons and his cattle, and he went with Ailill and Medb to drive the cattle from Cúailnge. (Jeffrey Gantz, *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, 126)

⁵¹⁹ See Meid, *Táin*, xi.

were probably once two separate tales or even two separate traditions, is too great and almost suggests a lack of editing. It seems that the aim of combining the two tales into one was that of establishing the connection with *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, and possibly of merging two traditions into a single one with a stronger connection to *Táin Bó Cúailnge*.

James Carney argued that *Táin Bó Fraích* was a unified narrative with no basis in tradition, but showing learned borrowings from Latin ecclesiastical sources. He rejected the idea that there could have been a redactor at work in this case, but believed that the end result was the work of the author (in the modern sense of the word). His argument is not entirely convincing.⁵²⁰

⁵²⁰ See James Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History* (Dublin, 1955), pp. 1-76. Gerard Murphy, in his review of Carney in *Éigse*, 8 (1955-57), 152-64, disagreeing with Thurneysen, proposed that the tale was originally a unit, and that any inconsistencies were due to the scribe, to whom a story-teller was supposedly narrating the tale, becoming tired; consequently, the scribe had to arrange the ending of the tale himself. See also Dewi Wyn Evans, 'The Learned Borrowings Claimed for *Táin Bó Fraích*' in *Ogma: Essays in Celtic Studies in Honour of Próinséas Ní Chathain*, edited by Michael Richter and Jean-Michel Picard (Dublin, 2002), pp. 182-94. See also Meid, *TBF*, 17-18 on *cen tabairt mná chuca*, for a different argument. Another study worth reading is Donald E. Meek, 'Táin Bó Fraích and Other "Fráech" Texts: A Study in Thematic Relationships', *CMCS*, 7 (Summer 1984), 1-37; 8 (Winter 1984), 65-85. I am obliged to credit Dr. Simon Rodway with making this point to me and reminding me of some of the references.

IV.5.2.7 *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*

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Mark on the horizontal axis	Event
A Exposition	Mac Dathó, king of Leinster, has a famous hound named Ailbe. Two sets of messengers come at the same time to ask for the hound: the messengers from Ailill and Medb, and the messengers from Conchobor. They are all made welcome and brought into the hall.
B Inciting moment	Both sets of messengers request the hound and offer gifts.
C	Mac Dathó lapses into deep silence and neither eats nor drinks nor sleeps. His silence continues and is not broken even when his wife demands reasons for it. Mac Dathó and his wife converse and she offers advice. Mac Dathó decides to heed it.
D Hook	Mac Dathó promises the hound to both parties separately. The two parties arrive at Mac Dathó's hall on the same day to collect the hound. They are not friendly with one another because of the hundreds of years of warfare that has been between them. The feast begins: a special pig is slaughtered and brought in and pronounced good by Conchobor and Ailill. The problem of dividing the pig arises. Bricriu points out that the only way to divide the pig is according to brave deeds and trophies.
E	Bragging, teasing and insults ensue. Cet mac Mágach gets supremacy

	over the men of Ireland and dares others to defy him and prove they are superior warriors.
F	Lóegaire, Óengus mac Láma Gábaid, Éogan mac Durthacht, Muinremor mac Gergind, Mend mac Sálchada, Celtchair mac Uthechair, and Cúscraid Mend Macha verbally challenge Cet and are found inferior.
G	Conall Cernach enters and, following enquiries and greeting, warns Cet that a fierce battle encounter is on the cards that night. He accepts Cet's challenge to a single combat and defeats him, having beheaded Cet's brother Ánlúan before he even entered the house.
H	The pig is divided and eaten, but the division is considered unfair by the men of Connacht. Fighting ensues.
I Climax	Mac Dathó brings the hound and lets him loose; the hound chooses the men of Ulster and is set to slaughtering the men of Connacht. The men of Connacht flee. The hound attacks the chariot of Ailill and Medb and is killed by Fer Loga. The flight of the men of Connacht turns southwards. The hound's head falls from the chariot.
J Dénouement	Fer Loga, Ailill's charioteer, hides in the heather, springs into Conchobor's chariot and makes Conchobor buy his own freedom. After a year, Fer Loga is sent westwards across Athlone with booty from Conchobor.

Like the previous two tales discussed, *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó* contains a single episode without any sub-episodes. The graph curve is similar to that of *Aided Óenfir Aífe*, yet somewhat less smooth, showing that the progression of the action is slightly more complicated. This tale contains seven short parts that function as embedded tales. They give very brief accounts of Cet mac Mágach's exploits that are not directly related to the tale of Mac Dathó's pig. They are, however, part of the background information about Cet and part of the reasoning as to why he should be the champion to divide the pig.

The exposition of this tale is very thorough and reminds one somewhat of the formulaic beginning traditionally used in the Welsh material:

Boí rí amrae for Laignib, Mac Dathó a ainm. Boí cú occo. Im-dīched in cu Laigniu huili. Ailbe ainm in chon, ocus ba lán Hériu dia airdicus in chon.⁵²¹

It provides the information regarding the identity of the owner of the hound and his territory, as well as the name and the fame of the hound itself. The inciting moment, namely the two parties of messengers asking for the hound to be given to them, is situated at the end of the exposition and gives the story its direction.

After the inciting moment, the tension stalls somewhat while Mac Dathó despairs over his predicament. However, the cunning solution that his wife suggests, coupled with the dispute about who will divide the pig, provides the much needed intensive rise in tension that facilitates a fully developed climax. This part of the narrative contains seven

⁵²¹ Rudolf Thurneysen, *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó* (Dublin, 1986), 1.

There was a famous king of Leinster. Mac Dathó was his name. He had a hound; the hound defended the whole of Leinster. The hound's name was Ailbe, and Ireland was full of its fame. (N. Chadwick, *An Early Irish Reader* (Cambridge, 1927), 16)

short embedded stories, which contribute a very short account of the history of some heroes, mostly in relation to their names or their ancestors' names.

The single climax, namely the moment when the hound, brought out by Mac Dathó, chooses the Ulstermen and begins to slaughter the men of Connacht, is well-developed and centres on the aftermath of the fighting:

Do-lluid a-mmaidm andess for Beluch Sen- Roírenn, for Áth Midbine i Maistin, sech Cill nDara, sech Ráith Imgain, hi Fid nGaible do Áth Mac Lugnai, sech Druim-Dá-Maige, for Drochet Coirpri. Oc Áth Chinn Con i mBiliu, is and ro-lá cenn in chon asin charput. Oc techt iar fraíchrud Midi síar, is and do-n-árlaic Fer Loga isin fraích .i. ara Ailella, oculus ro-ling isin carpat iar cúl Conchobair co-rragab a chenn dara aiss. 'Emde, a Chonchobair!' olse. 'T'ógríar!' ol Conchobor. 'Níba mór', ol Fer loga [sic], 'i. mo brith latt co Emain Macha oculus mná óentama Ulad oculus a n-ingena macdacht do gabáil chepóce cecha nóna immum co-n-érbrat: Fer Loga mo lennán-sa.' Ba écen ón, ar ní-laimtis cena la Conchobor. Oculus ro-léced Fer Loga dar Áth Lúain síar dia bláidna oculus dí gabair Conchobair leis co n-allaib óir friu.⁵²²

With this dénouement, the conflict is thoroughly resolved, despite the fact that no further information is given about Mac Dathó. Only the information regarding Ailill and Medb and Conchobor is given, since they are figures of higher importance in the Ulster Cycle. The very last sentence,

[s]céla muice Meicc Dathó in sin⁵²³

⁵²² Rudolf Thurneysen, *SMMD*, 20.

Their flight turned southwards, over Bellaghmoon, past Reerin, over Áth Midbine in Mastiu, past Drum Criach which to-day is called Kildare, past Rathangan into Feighcullen to the Ford of Mac Lugna, past the hill of the two plains over Cairpre's Bridge. At the Ford of the Dog's Head in Farbill the dog's head fell from the chariot. Coming westwards over the heath of Meath, Ferloga, Ailill's charioteer, lay down in the heather and sprang into the chariot behind the back of Conchobar, and in this way seized his head from behind. "Buy your freedom, Conchobar," said he. "Make your own terms," said Conchobar. "It will not be much, replied Ferloga, "namely, you to take me with you to Emain Macha, and the women of Ulster and their young daughters to sing a panegyric to me every evening saying: 'Ferloga is my darling.'" There was no help for it, for they did not dare do otherwise for fear of Conchobar; and that day a year hence Ferloga was sent across Athlone westwards, and a pair of Conchobar's horses with him, with Golden Bridles. (N. Chadwick, *An Early Irish Reader*, 24)

⁵²³ Rudolf Thurneysen, *SMMD*, 20. This is the story of Mac Dathó's pig. (Translation mine.)

provides the tale with the title by which it was known. The tale bears the same title in the manuscripts, albeit with some variation:

In two MSS. of the earliest version it is called: Scéla (Sgéla) muicci M(ei)c Dathó (H, H1 § 20), ‘Tidings of the pig of MacDathó’, in the third (L) it is entitled: Incipit Scél (sing.) Mucci M(ei)c Dathó. In a later redaction (R § 20) it is designated Scaradh Ulad ocus Connacht im choin M(ei)c Dá-Thó ocus imma muic, ‘The Separation of the Ulstermen and the Connaughtmen on account of the dog of M.D. and his pig’; likewise in the latest version (in Edinb. iomsgaradh instead of scaradh).⁵²⁴

The title as such, with the exception of the version given in R § 20, is somewhat deceptive and misleading, since the main point and the driving force of the narrative is the hound while the problem of the pig and its division, although an important part of the narrative, is secondary in importance.

⁵²⁴ Rudolf Thurneysen, *SMMD*, i.

IV.5.2.8 *Longes Mac n-Uislenn*

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Mark on the horizontal axis	Event
A Exposition	The Ulstermen are drinking in the house of Feidlimid mac Dail; his heavily pregnant wife is waiting on them.
B Inciting moment	The pregnant woman goes to bed, the child in her womb screams; everybody wakes up.
C	Sencha mac Ailella orders the warriors to be still until the woman has explained the noise. Feidlimid, her consort, asks her to explain the noise. The woman implores Cathbad to answer for her.
D	Cathbad explains the unborn child's scream, saying that the as yet unborn girl will be a great beauty who will cause much bloodshed among the Ulstermen. He feels the woman's abdomen and names the child Derdriu.
E	After Derdriu's birth, Cathbad prophesies evil in connection with her; violent deeds and destruction, slaying and weeping, anger and fame. The warriors demand that the child be slain.
F	Conchobor decides that she should be spared and brought up in isolation to be his wife.
G Dénouement of episode 1	Derdriu is reared as decided by Conchobor, seeing no one but her foster mother, her foster father, and Leborcham, a female satirist.
H	Derdriu sees her foster father skinning a calf outside on the snow,

Exposition (episode 2 begins)	and a raven drinking the blood.
I Inciting moment	Derdriu tells Leborcham that she could only love a man who would have the three colours she sees out there: hair as black as a raven, cheeks as red as blood, body as white as snow. Based on Derdriu's description, Leborcham identifies the man she will love as Noísiu, one of the sons of Uisliu.
J	Noísiu is on the rampart and singing; Derdriu hears his voice. She goes out and talks to him. Derdriu proclaims she would favour Noísiu over Conchobor. Noísiu rejects Derdriu because of Cathbad's prophecy. She threatens him with shame and derision if he should reject her because of the prophecy.
K	Noísiu's brothers try to talk him out of risking Conchobor's anger by taking Derdriu, but they are unsuccessful and the brothers and Derdriu decide to go into exile.
L	The brothers are pursued by Conchobor and attempts are made on their lives. For a while, they are under protection everywhere in Ireland.
M Dénouement of episode 2 Exposition of	The Ulstermen force them to flee to Scotland, where they take up mercenary service under the king of Scotland. Their houses are made in a way that prevents Derdriu from being seen so that they will not be killed on her account.

episode 3 (simultaneously)	
N Inciting moment	The king's steward sees Derdriu and Noísiu sleeping. He relates her beauty to the king. The king orders the steward to try to win Derdriu for him secretly.
O	The steward is unsuccessful in his attempts. Once again, attempts are made upon the lives of the sons of Uisliu. The men of Scotland gather to kill the brothers. Derdriu warns Noísiu about this. The brothers and Derdriu escape to an island in the sea.
P	The Ulstermen persuade Conchobor to allow the sons of Uisliu and Derdriu to return. The brothers ask for guarantors (Fergus, Dubthach and Cormac mac Conchobuir) to come with them.
Q	Fergus is invited to ale-banquets; the brothers insist they will only eat the food of Conchobor. Fiachu mac Fergusa comes with them, while the other two guarantors stay behind. The brothers arrive at the green of Emain. Éogan mac Durthacht, the king of Fernmag, who has been at war with Conchobor for a considerable amount of time, has come to make peace with Conchobor and is entrusted with killing the brothers.
R	Éogan approaches the brothers and Fiachu. He thrusts a spear at Noísiu and breaks his back; Fiachu tries to protect Noísiu and they both die. Ardann and Ainnle are killed, and Derdriu is brought over

	to Conchobor, her hands bound behind her back. Fergus, Dubthacht and Cormac hear about the events, they come and perform great deeds (slaying Mane and Fiachna; Traigthren). Conchobor is outraged. Fergus and Dubthach kill the maidens of Ulster, and Emain is burned. Fergus and Dubthach go to Ailill and Medb. Numerous people are exiled, crying does not cease for 16 years.
S	Derdriu never smiles, eats or sleeps enough, nor lifts her head from her knee for the duration of the year she spends with Conchobor. She mourns Noísiu and his brothers with a poem. When Conchobor mollifies her, she replies with a lament. She says she hates him most of all, along with Éogan mac Durthacht. Conchobor decides she should spend some time with Éogan.
T Climax	The assembly of Macha. Derdriu stands between the two men, firm in her resolve that she would not see them both on the same occasion. Conchobor makes a sleazy remark to Derdriu. Derdriu dashes her head against a boulder and dies.
U Dénouement	A short list of themes of the narrative (possibly titles) summarizes the essence of the tale.

The graph of the plot line of *Longes mac n-Uislenn* yields three independent episodes: the first one, marked blue on the graph, represents the period before Derdriu's birth and the prophecies pronounced by Cathbad that are associated with Derdriu. The

second episode, marked in red on the graph, relates the story of Derdriu growing up in isolation under the watchful eye of Leborcham, the female satirist, meeting and falling in love with Noísíú, and the very beginning of the exile of Derdriu and the sons of Uisliu. The third episode, marked in green on the graph, relates their exile in Scotland, their return to Ireland and the tragic consequences of their return. None of the three episodes contains any sub-episodes. Each episode is a relatively independent, self-contained unit of narrative, yet they are closely connected with each other and depend on each other for background that is essential for the reader's understanding of the narrative as a whole. The close connection between individual episodes is especially obvious in the way the dénouements of the first and second episodes develop into the expositions of the second and third episodes respectively. The blending between the dénouements and the expositions is such that it is almost impossible to determine the exact point where the dénouement of one episode ends and the exposition of the next episode begins.

The exposition of the narrative as a whole is satisfactory and provides a fairly detailed account of Derdriu's parental background and the situation and activities in the house prior to her birth. It begins with a rhetorical question, but is otherwise not formulaic. The expositions of the second and third episodes rely on the previous events and on the first exposition for any background details that are necessary for the understanding of the narrative. The rise in action in all three episodes is steady and does not contain any 'plateau' areas of stalled tension. Each episode has an inciting moment that gives the episode its direction. The first inciting moment, namely the unborn child's scream, is especially powerful and functions as a catalyst for the whole narrative. The

other two inciting moments (Derdriu's words upon seeing the dead raven on the snow in the second episode, and the servant of the king of Scotland noticing Derdriu's beauty and pronouncing her fit to be his king's wife), are somewhat less powerful and serve mainly to give the narrative its direction. All three climaxes are fully developed. In the first episode, the climax is Cathbad's full prophetic disclosure regarding Derdriu and the warriors' demand that Derdriu be slain. In the second episode, it is the decision taken by the sons of Uisliu (and Derdriu) to go into exile, while in the third episode, the climax is Derdriu's tragic death. The impact of this last climax is greatly strengthened by the grim and heartbreaking manner in which Derdriu dies. This climax is preceded by a great amount of action that causes a dramatic increase in tension. Each climax is followed by a rapid dénouement. This is especially true of the final dénouement, which essentially consists of what seems like a list of possible titles recapping the main events of the narrative:

Longas mac n-Uislenn in-sin ocus longas Fergus
 Ocus aided mac nUislenn ocus Derdrenn.⁵²⁵

The dénouement does not contain a formula, but merely reinforces the connection between the narrative and its title.

The narrative of *Longes Mac n-Uislenn* shows perhaps the best structural organization of all the Irish texts analysed for this research project. It is the most balanced in terms of episode length and the shape of the curve of the graph. In this respect, it

⁵²⁵ Vernam Hull, *Longes mac n-Uislenn* (New York, 1949), 51.

That [is] the exile of the Sons of Uisliu
 And the exile of Fergus and the violent
 Death of the Sons of Uisliu
 And of Derdriu. (Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 69)

resembles the two best organized narratives among the Welsh texts, namely those of *Pwyll* and *Math*. It is, however, not as complex as the structural organization of the Welsh texts, due to the lack of sub-episodes.

IV.5.3 Observations

A comparison of all twelve graphs yields some interesting observations. There seems to be a considerable difference between the Welsh and the Irish narratives in terms of organization and structure. All four Welsh narratives show a division into three episodes, although the division appears in some cases to be forced upon the narrative by the redactor. This is very obviously the case with *Manawydan*, and to a somewhat lesser degree with *Branwen*. In all the narratives belonging to the *Four Branches*, most episodes are fairly independent, but are at the same time a necessary component part because they add a considerable amount of information regarding the characters in the narrative, or an explanation for the state of affairs that appears as part of the conflict in later episodes. All four narratives also present some degree of sub-episodic division. Among the Irish narratives examined, five narratives consist of a single episode each. This is undisputably true of *Compert Con Culainn*, *Aided Óenfir Aife*, *Tochmarc Emire* and *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*. *Mesca Ulad* is possibly a somewhat uncertain case due to its fragmentary nature; however, since the two fragments can be effectively combined into a single narrative, which is also the way in which they were viewed by the editors such as J. Carmichael Watson (whose edition is used for the purpose of the present research project) and William Maunsell Hennessy, it is not only acceptable but also necessary to consider them

a single narrative and treat them as such despite textual inconsistencies such as changes in names and the nature of the enclosure. Therefore, *Mesca Ulad*, made up of two fragments, is a single narrative with a single episode. The graphs of *Táin Bó Fraích* and *Echtra Nerai* show that these two narratives consist of two episodes each. In both of these narratives, the episodes are so independent that it would be almost possible to consider them separate narratives. In *Echtra Nerai*, the first episode does not seem to add any information to the character of Nera, because his character does not show any considerable development. It does not provide a convincing reason as to why or how Nera came into the *síd*, either. In the case of *Táin Bó Fraích*, the inconsistencies in the narratives between the two episodes are such that it would almost make more sense to consider the two episodes as two separate narratives. However, since they occur as a single narrative in the manuscripts, they are considered as such. *Longes Mac n-Uislenn* is the only one of the medieval Irish narratives selected for this research that shows a division into three episodes. In this respect, it is the most structurally developed of all the Irish narratives examined. None of the Irish narratives examined show any evidence of sub-episodic division.

The quality of the exposition varies from narrative to narrative. Of the four Welsh narratives examined, three of them (*Pwyll*, *Branwen*, and *Math*) have excellent expositions, while one, *Manawydan*, shows an exposition that seems (at least to a modern reader) to be less than perfect as a result of the redactor attempting to establish a close connection with the narrative in *Branwen*. With the exception of *Manawydan*, the expositions in the Welsh narratives are formulaic. The formula they follow is very rigid

and establishes the descent and territory of the character. In the Irish narratives examined, the expositions are not as often formulaic; they also seem to presuppose a certain degree of knowledge regarding the characters involved on the part of the reader, which is not the case with the Welsh narratives examined.

The Welsh narratives also show a preference for multiple climaxes in individual episodes, which is not the case with the Irish narratives. Some of the Welsh narratives contain episodes where the climax is undeveloped (the third episode of *Branwen*) or altogether absent (the first episode of *Manawydan*). These episodes seem to be the result of editing, namely of the redactor's additions to what may have been the existing material in the case of *Branwen*, and in the case of *Manawydan*, of the redactor's effort to establish a connection with the narrative that appears immediately before it in the manuscript.

The quality of the dénouement varies, too. Among the Welsh narratives examined, only one, namely *Branwen*, shows a less than satisfactory dénouement. This dénouement is the consequence of editing in order to add a pseudo-historical episode to what seems to have once been a narrative with a perfect, formulaic dénouement. The narratives of the *Four Branches* all have the same dénouement formula present in them, the only difference being that in *Branwen*, the formula does not occur at the very end of the narrative due to the above-mentioned interpolation. The eight Irish narratives do not seem to show the same fondness for a formulaic dénouement. They mostly tend towards a very rapid dénouement, which can be thoroughly satisfying in most cases. The only

narrative where the dénouement is rather unsatisfactory is *Táin Bó Fraích*. This is the consequence of the somewhat unbalanced narrative in terms of the content and inconsistencies in the narrative.

The plot line graphs of the Welsh narratives exhibit a great deal of system and symmetry with regards to the structure. The plot line graphs of *Pwyll* and *Math* are almost identical. The plot line graphs of *Branwen* and *Manawydan* are also very similar, but in a different way: they seem to be almost exact mirror images of each other. The plot line graphs of the Irish single-episode narratives are very similar to each other, too. What is more, they are similar to the graph shapes of the individual episodes in the narratives with two episodes, in that they tend to have a more substantial amount of rising tension leading to the climax, which is followed by a shorter, usually rapid dénouement. *Longes Mac n-Uislenn* stands apart as the only narrative with a very organized tripartite structure which is reminiscent of the graph shapes of the individual episodes in *Pwyll* and *Math*.

From the results of this analysis, it would seem that the redactor of the *Four Branches* was an artist with a keen eye for structure, and with considerable awareness of the power of the structure in a literary work. He seems to have built his narratives in a careful way, with the overall intention of establishing a unity between the narratives, and of forming a larger unit – namely that of a literary cycle. The Irish redactors – and the differences among the narratives, as well as the fact that the number of narratives preserved was much greater than in Wales, indicate that there must have been more than one redactor – did not seem to be so concerned with creating a cycle, nor did they pay so

much attention to either macro or micro structures of the narratives. The Irish materials seem to be at different stages of development, which demonstrates that some editing was certainly present, but in a less organized way than in Wales in the case of the *Four Branches*.

The table that follows offers a brief summary of the findings of this chapter.

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CHAPTER V: DEFAMILIARIZATION

This chapter examines the defamiliarization elements that occur in the narratives, and analyzes their placement in the narrative. This chapter concentrates on the following seven defamiliarization elements: triads, lists, onomastic tales, embedded tales, poetry, the watchman device, and taboos or *geasa*.

By using the plot line graphs of the narratives that were developed in the previous chapter, it is possible to denote the placement of individual defamiliarization elements in each narrative by imposing symbols of different colours in appropriate places next to the curve of each graph. Due to practical limitations such as those of paper size, and of the computer programmes used, it is impossible to position all of the defamiliarization elements parallel with the curve of the graph. This presents a minor problem when the defamiliarization elements occur in clusters. In such cases, the symbols are positioned next to one another to denote a cluster.

The present research project concentrates on the ways these defamiliarization elements affect the narrative and on their perceived functions. Detailed analysis of each individual defamiliarization element regarding the type of verse in terms of metre and rhyme, the type of onomastic tale, the history of a taboo, the significance of a triad or the intertextual cross-references these defamiliarization elements evoke are excluded from the discussion because they would detract too much from the basic aim of the present research project and would not necessarily contribute to the discussion. Some of these

aspects have also been adequately dealt with by other scholars. T. Gerald Hunter discussed the types of onomastic tales in the *Four Branches* in significant detail in his MPhil thesis mentioned earlier; intertextual cross-references and their significance, on the other hand, are far too extensive a topic to include into a project of limited length such as a doctoral thesis.

The defamiliarization elements are represented by squares of different colours on the graphs. Each colour signifies one type of defamiliarization element. To the left of each coloured square, there is a number, which makes it easier to identify each defamiliarization element in the reference table that accompanies each graph. The colour coding of the squares follows a simple system: red squares represent triads; dark blue ones represent onomastic tales; light blue squares represent embedded stories; yellow squares represent poetry; green ones represent taboos and *geasa*; brown squares represent lists, and purple ones represent the watchman device.

V.1 Defamiliarization elements: a brief introduction

V.1.1 Triads

Triads are, essentially, a technique of grouping themes, persons, events, or ideas into threes, possibly in order to make the memorizing of the material easier and more effective. They abound in the medieval Welsh tradition, and they are also present in the medieval Irish tradition and in other Celtic traditions.⁵²⁶ Evidence of triads occurs in other literary traditions somewhat sporadically and not nearly as frequently as in the traditions of the Celtic countries.⁵²⁷ Patrick Sims-Williams⁵²⁸ observed that triads, due to the frequency of their occurrence in medieval Welsh and Irish sources, are characteristic of Celtic mnemonics, although they are not exclusively limited to the Celtic tradition.

The seminal work on the Welsh triads, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein: the Triads of the Island of Britain*, edited and translated by Rachel Bromwich, with an added commentary, was first published in 1961 and subsequently revised in 1978 and 2006. The book is an edition of collections of triads from several different manuscript sources:

- Peniarth 16, folios 40-54b (detached portion of NLW 5266 B): fragments dated to 13th-15th centuries. Triads 1-46;

⁵²⁶ “The triads are not confined to Welsh literature: within the Celtic language group, triads occur in Scottish Gaelic, Breton, Cornish, and Irish texts, as well as in Welsh texts.” (Sara Elin Roberts, *The Legal Triads of Medieval Wales*, Cardiff, 2007, 1)

⁵²⁷ Kuno Meyer, *Triads of Ireland* (Dublin, 1906), xv.

⁵²⁸ Patrick Sims-Williams, “Thought, word and deed: an Irish triad”, *Ériu* 29, (1978), 78–111.

- *Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch* (NLW Peniarth 4), col. 588-600: dated about 1350. Triads 47-69 (material taken from *Llyfr Coch Hergest* (pp. 297-309) where the *Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch* text is fragmentary);
- Peniarth 47, pp. 17-25: 15th century. Triads 70-80;
- Peniarth 50 (also known as *Y Cwta Cyfarwydd*), pp. 149-60: first half of the 15th century. Triads 81-86;
- Miscellaneous later manuscript sources.⁵²⁹ Triads 87-97.

Each of the above sources omits some triads, which are in turn found in other manuscripts; some of the triads referenced in the *Four Branches* have not been preserved in any of the sources, and are therefore considered lost. Bromwich emphasizes that the body of triads must have been far greater than that which is edited in *TYP*, which is evidenced by the triads referenced in the *Four Branches* that have no correspondent triad in the book. Probably oral in origin, the triads often occur in contrasting pairs or groups.⁵³⁰

The triads in *TYP* are preserved in the same order in which they appear in Pen. 16, the reason being that Bromwich believed Pen. 16 to retain the older grouping. The triad form, according to Bromwich,

was used as a means of cataloguing a variety of technical information: in addition to *TYP* triads are used extensively in the legal codes, in technical treatises on medicine, and are found in the fourteenth-century *Grammar* of Einion Offeiriad, where the *Trioedd Cerdd* deal with the details of poetic craftsmanship.⁵³¹

⁵²⁹ See Rachel Bromwich, *Trioedd Ynys Prydein* (third edition, Cardiff, 2006), xi-lii.

⁵³⁰ Rachel Bromwich, *TYP*, lxv.

⁵³¹ Rachel Bromwich, *TYP*, liii.

Triadic grouping was a commonly used mnemonic device in medieval Wales; Bromwich speculated that triads were used as a memory aid for bards who practised the tradition of oral history and narrative and that the grouping of triads may have functioned as an equivalent of the classifications of stories in saga lists, where the stories were classified with regard to their subject matter.⁵³² She did, however, point out that with one exception in the Fourth Branch of the *Mabinogi*, the evidence that the highest classes of bards would have narrated stories is lacking:

[a]part from a well-known passage in the *Mabinogi of Math*, there is no evidence that in Wales the highest classes of bards concerned themselves with the narration of stories, as did the *filid* in Ireland. The passage referred to tells how Gwydion arrived at the court of Pryderi as the leader of the company of bards, himself bearing the appearance of a *pencerdd*, and how he entertained the court with story-telling (*cyfarwyddyd*). The narrator adds that Gwydion was the best *cyfarwydd* in the world.⁵³³

There are in fact two passages in *Math* where Gwydion, disguised as a poet, narrates stories; the second passage tells how he and Lleu are at Aranrhod's court in order to undo the second curse Aranrhod has put on Lleu.⁵³⁴ The fact remains, however, that *Math* is the only Middle Welsh narrative that implies that the highest classes of bards engaged in story-telling.

⁵³² See Rachel Bromwich, *TYP*, lviii-lx. It has to be noted that there is no extant evidence for saga lists in the Welsh tradition.

⁵³³ Rachel Bromwich, *TYP*, lxix. The actual passage can be found in Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 69; its translation in Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 48.

⁵³⁴ "E porthawr," heb ef, "dos ymywn, a dywet uot yma beird o Uorgannwc." Y porthawr a aeth. "Graessaw Duw wrthunt. Gellwng y mywn wy," heb hi. Diruawr leuenyd a uu yn eu herbyn. Yr yneud a gyweirwyd ac y wwyta yd aethpwyd. Guedy daruot y bwyta, ymdidan a wnaeth hi a Guydyon am chwedleu a chyuarwydyt. Ynteu Wydyon kyuarwyd da oed. (Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 81-2)

"Porter," said Gwydion, "go inside and say there are poets here from Morgannwg." The porter went. "God's welcome to them. Let them come in," said Aranrhod. There was great rejoicing at their arrival. The hall was prepared and they went to eat. When they had finished eating, she and Gwydion talked of tales and storytelling. And Gwydion was a good storyteller. (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 57)

Regarding the use of triads, Ifor Williams argued that they were scribal glosses.⁵³⁵

Rachel Bromwich, however, rejected the idea and pointed out that

[t]he *Four Branches of the Mabinogi* present a marked contrast to the other *chwedlau* in that a number (ten) of triads have been incorporated into all but the First Branch. [...] I think that as a whole the allusions to triads have a more fundamental relation than this to the stories in which they are cited and that the triads belong essentially to the same field of tradition as the *Mabinogi*.⁵³⁶

She argued that the stories would be much poorer without the inclusions of triads, and that the use of triads was an expression of artistry by the final author of the *Four Branches*, intended to “heighten the dramatic effect of his narrative by relating it to a wider field of tradition”.⁵³⁷ There is absolutely no doubt that Bromwich was correct about that; the aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the incredible skill with which the ‘final author’ (as Bromwich refers to him; this research project refers to him as ‘redactor’) included triads and other elements (such as lists, onomastic stories, embedded stories, proverbs, poetry, the watchman’s device, and taboos and *geasa*) into his narrative to enhance its aesthetic properties, to shift the perception of the narrative, and to keep his audience (be it readers or listeners) focused and interested.

Sara Elin Roberts draws a parallel between the medieval Welsh lawyers and the medieval Welsh poets in terms of learnedness and education, and possibly bardic schools and legal schools.⁵³⁸ The mastery of either craft demanded the knowledge of an enormous

⁵³⁵ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, xxx.

⁵³⁶ Rachel Bromwich, *TYP*, lxxi.

⁵³⁷ Rachel Bromwich, *TYP*, lxxi.

⁵³⁸ There is very little material preserved that deals with the education and training of poets in medieval Wales.

amount of information (possibly acquired through oral transmission), as well as practical application of the material, which makes likely the use of mnemonic devices:

[s]everal elements of the poets' education are found in triadic form: the *Trioedd Cerdd* (the poets' triads) found in the bardic grammars point to the linguistic and composition skills they needed, and the gnomic triads, often grouped with *TYP* in the manuscripts, were summaries of traditional 'wisdom'. *TYP* was an index of the corpus of historical lore, folk tales and mythology, and the references to triads from *TYP* in medieval poetry and prose may be testimony to their use in that way.⁵³⁹

Roberts points out that it would have been unusual for mnemonics to exist in a written form originally. The various collections of triads, which obviously existed for different purposes (such as for example providing a quick reference to the laws), demonstrate that at some point, the way the triads were viewed must have changed so that the material was written down.

According to Roberts, there is evidence of several different types of triads within the genre:

- simple triads, which follow the pattern of 'heading' and three 'limbs': [these are the] three X: X1, X2, X3.
- Triads with an extension following the 'limbs': three Y: Y1, Y2, Y3; [extension].
- Triads where each of the limbs is followed by an extension: three Z: Z1. [extension], Z2, [extension], Z3, [extension].

Roberts references Fergus Kelly's observation⁵⁴⁰ that the Irish triads differ in this respect, since adding extensions to the 'limbs' is very rare in the Irish triadic tradition.

⁵³⁹ Sara Elin Roberts, *Legal Triads*, 4. See also: Rachel Bromwich, *TYP*, lxxiii-lxxiv.

⁵⁴⁰ Fergus Kelly, 'Thinking in threes: the triad in early Irish Literature', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 125 (2003 lectures), 1-18. Referenced in Sara Elin Roberts, *Legal Triads*, 9.

The Triads of Ireland, dated by Kuno Meyer to 850-900 A.D.,⁵⁴¹ seem to be largely proverbial or homiletic in their character, and often reminiscent of gnostic material. They are preserved in a number of manuscripts dating from the 14th -19th centuries.⁵⁴²

- The Yellow Book of Lecan (TCD 1318 – H. 2. 16), pp. 414b-418a. End of the 14th century; complete copy.
- The Book of Húi Maine (RIA Stowe, D II 1), folios 190a-191a. 14th century; complete copy.
- The Book of Ballymote (RIA 23 P 12), pp. 65b-66b. End of the 14th century.
- The Book of Lecan (RIA 23 P 2). (The part containing the Triads is currently bound in TCD H. 2. 17, p. 186b-184b.) 15th century; complete copy.
- RIA 23 N 10, pp. 98-101. 1575 (paper manuscript); a complete copy (a gap made up by the vellum portion of the MS).
- TCD H 1 15, pp. 946-57. 1745, written by Tadhg Tiorthach Ó Neachtain; paper manuscript; complete copy, glossed in Modern Irish.
- RIA, Stowe Collection, 23 N 27, folios 1a-7b. 1714, written by Domnall (or Daniel) Ó Duind mac Eimuinn.
- Manchester, Rylands Library. 1836, written by Peter O’Longan. Found by Strachan.
- Edinburgh, Advocates Library, Kilbride III (begins on folio 9b2).

⁵⁴¹ Kuno Meyer, *Triads of Ireland*, Dublin, 1906, x-xi.

⁵⁴² See Kuno Meyer, *Triads*, v-vii.

The triads in the first six sources are, according to Meyer,⁵⁴³ identical, although there are occasional omissions of individual triads as well as variations in the order in which they occur. The other three sources contain copies of the Triads, with greater or lesser corruptions in some of them. The language is described by Meyer as late Old Irish.⁵⁴⁴ They are grouped according to the characteristics of their contents, such as topography-related triads and triads dealing with legal issues. Regarding the origins of the triads, Meyer writes,

[i]n endeavouring to trace the origin of the Triad as a form of literary composition among the Irish, one must remember that it is but one of several similar numerative sayings common in Irish literature. Thus the collection here printed contains three duads (124. 133. 134), seven tetrads (223. 230. 234. 244. 248. 251. 252), and one heptad (235). A whole Irish law-book is composed in the form of heptads; while triads, tetrads, &c., occur in every part of the Laws. Such schematic arrangements were of course a great aid to memory. If the Triad stood alone, the idea that it owes its origin to the effect of the doctrine of the Trinity upon the Celtic imagination might reasonably be entertained. The fact that this doctrine has led to many peculiar phenomena in Irish folklore, literature, and art has frequently been pointed out. Nor would I deny that the sacred character of the number three, together with the greater facility of composition, may have contributed to the popularity of the Triad, which is certainly the most common among the various numerical sayings as well as the only one that has survived to the present day. However that may be, I believe that the model upon which the Irish triads, tetrads, pentads, &c., were formed is to be sought in those enumerative sayings—*Zahlensprüche*, as the German technical term is—of Hebrew poetry to be found in several books of the Old Testament.⁵⁴⁵

As well as biblical sayings, Meyer raises the numerical Greek and Roman proverbs as possible sources for the Irish imitations such as triads, duads, tetrads, hexads, and heptads. The material in *The Triads of Ireland* is very different to that in *TYP* not only in terms of lacking extensions, but also in terms of reference. While *TYP* contains a large

⁵⁴³ Kuno Meyer, *Triads*, Dublin, 1906, vi.

⁵⁴⁴ Kuno Meyer, *Triads*, x.

⁵⁴⁵ Kuno Meyer, *Triads*, xii.

number of triads that reference characters or events from both prose and poetry, *The Triads of Ireland* contain only two triads that refer to medieval Irish literature. Triad 62⁵⁴⁶ references *Táin Bó Cúailnge*; triad 236⁵⁴⁷ refers to Finn. The Irish triads, compared to the Welsh ones, seem to be more a collection of lore and gnomic sayings.

V.1.2 Onomastic stories

Onomastics, the inquiry into (proper) names and their origins, is linked to aetiology, which is

generally defined as the practice of explaining the origins of things, [...] perhaps one of the oldest, most archetypical activities in the history of human beings as creative and questioning creatures. Aetiology, in attempts at explaining the original “hows” and “whys” of existence, is central to any ordered religious, mythological or belief system. Thus any narratives of a mythological, religious or sacred nature can almost always be expected to contain aetiological material as a fundamental constituent. [...] ⁵⁴⁸

Hunter describes the onomastics relating to place names as the most commonly occurring type and links it to the desire of human beings to establish a (better) connection between themselves and their environment. Onomastics relating to personal and place names are very common in the Old Testament and in the Book of Genesis; however, he notices that there is no onomastic lore in verse narratives of the Middle Ages such as *Beowulf*, *Nibelungenlied*, *Canterbury Tales*, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, or the works of Chrétien de Troyes. In prose narratives of the time, however, onomastic lore abounds. ⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁶ Kuno Meyer, *Triads*, 9.

⁵⁴⁷ Kuno Meyer, *Triads*, 31.

⁵⁴⁸ T. Gerald Hunter, “Onomastic Lore in the Native Middle Welsh prose”, unpublished MPhil thesis, Aberystwyth, 1988.

⁵⁴⁹ Hunter draws attention to the fact that there is evidence of prose narratives only medieval literature in three languages of Western Europe: Old Norse, Middle Welsh, and Old and Middle Irish. See T. Gerald Hunter, “Onomastic Lore”, 3-24.

In the Welsh tradition, *The Four Branches* contain several examples of it; the same is true of *Culhwch ac Olwen*, *Breuddwyd Macsen*, and even *Breuddwyd Rhonabwy* and *Lludd a Llefelys*.⁵⁵⁰ The Three Romances, however, do not contain a single example of onomastic lore. Onomastic lore is strongly present in most of the texts of the Ulster Cycle, including most of the Irish texts selected for the purposes of the present discussion. Ruairí Ó hUiginn,⁵⁵¹ discussing the onomastic material in *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, notices that such material is divided into lists of names (descriptive context) and onomastic legends that explain the names of certain places. Onomastic material does not

necessarily make any considerable contribution to the action of the tale. Much of the *Táin* is taken up by long formulaic passages which are very often descriptive in their context.⁵⁵²

The same is true of, for example, *Tochmarc Emire*, which contains extremely long descriptive passages which slow down and stall the action of the tale.

Some of the tales contain lost onomastic tales, namely parts of the text which give the impression that there may once have been an onomastic tale, or that there should be one, yet it is missing, perhaps due to lack of understanding of that particular onomastic element on the part of the copyist or redactor. Such cases are excluded from the present discussion on the grounds of lack of internal textual evidence of the tales that would prove that the missing onomastic tale had indeed once existed in the text in the exact place where it is felt it should have been.

⁵⁵⁰ For a detailed list of the onomastic tales in these texts, see. T. Gerald Hunter, "Onomastic Lore", 22-3.

⁵⁵¹ Ruairí Ó hUiginn, "The background and development of *Táin Bó Cúailnge* - Onomastic material", J.P. Mallory (ed.), *Aspects of the Táin*, 49.

⁵⁵² Ruairí Ó hUiginn, "The background and development of *Táin Bó Cúailnge* - Onomastic material", J.P. Mallory (ed.), *Aspects of the Táin*, 49.

Proverbs are a sub-class of onomastic lore for the purpose of this research project. Proverbs are generally short sayings based on common sense or experience (or a combination of both); often metaphorical, a proverb tends to be passed down through generations orally and tend to explain a common practice or rule. Lists, however, are discussed separately due to the effect they can sometimes have on the narrative.

V.1.3 Embedded stories

Embedded stories are stories within stories, often offering a different perspective or additional information to the main narrative. The concept of a story within a story was probably present in literature even before the Middle Ages. A multi-level story in the form of a dream ('frame stories') consists of different parts of a longer story, or a digression within it, or a series of digressions. Somewhat limited by the medium of oral transmission, they seem to have been a popular literary device at the time.

Modern literary theory often refers to embedded stories as 'Chinese boxes' in an attempt to describe how they fit into different levels of narratives that may occur in a single text. Brian McHale explains the principle of such stories:

[...] recursive structures – nesting or embedding, as in a set of Chinese boxes or Russian *babushka* dolls. [...] have the effect of interrupting and complicating the ontological "horizon" of the fiction, multiplying its worlds, and laying bare the process of world-construction. A recursive structure results when you perform the same operation over and over again, each time operating on the product of the previous operation. For example, take a film, which projects a fictional world; within that world, place actors and a film crew, who make a film which in turn projects its *own* fictional world; then within *that* world place another film crew, who make another film, and so on.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵³ Brian McHale, *Postmodernist Fiction*, New York, London, 1987, 112-13.

Thus the audience can progress from one level of the narrative into another one, and perhaps even further. Such structure also allows for the fictional character of the narrative to be emphasised, and for the contrast between parallel worlds to be more pronounced. At the same time, the transgression from one story into another effectively interrupts the narrative.

V.1.4 Lists

Lists are a common feature of early literature and are present in Old English and Old Icelandic poetry, especially in the so-called ‘wisdom literature’⁵⁵⁴ and in the earliest extant poetic compositions. Several Old English poems consist entirely of lists, while others have embedded lists. In poetry, lists can present a particular difficulty for both readers and redactors because of the metrical characteristics they display, and the way these metrical characteristics interfere with the structure of the poem.

Elizabeth Jackson, in her article “‘Not simply lists’: an Eddic perspective on short-item lists in Old English poems”,⁵⁵⁵ proposes that the function of lists in Old English poetry was a mnemonic one. She differentiates between long and short lists, and proposes subtypes based on the metrical strophe; discussion of the types of lists based on metrics, however, is irrelevant to the present discussion, since the present research is

⁵⁵⁴ For more details, see Elizabeth Jackson, “‘Not simply lists’: an Eddic perspective on short-item lists in Old English poems”, *Speculum*, 73 (April 1998), 338.

⁵⁵⁵ Elizabeth Jackson, “‘Not simply lists’”, 338-371.

concerned with prose narrative. Jackson mentions several features, or listing devices, that are evident in most Old Icelandic lists:

introductory and opening devices; the breaking up of the list into sections and then into smaller units, usually comprising an item pair or triplet; unifying devices, including frames and links between sections and item pairs; variety, provided by pattern changes or interruptions, to avoid monotony; and closing or concluding devices.⁵⁵⁶

As the most important devices, Jackson gives list signals (announcing to the audience that a list is about to begin), topic words and statements of the organizing principle (helpful for the understanding of the list), distinctive opening items/item pairs (lists beginning with an item or a pair of items that is separated from the rest of the list; some of these can function as list signals); list sections and item pairs (sections often contain an equal number of items for the purpose of balance); frames (for the sake of unity); links (also for the sake of unity); pattern changes and interruptions (introduces to prevent monotony; this can be achieved by varying the item length, phrasing, metre).⁵⁵⁷ In a previous article,⁵⁵⁸ Jackson defined a minimal list as a list that contains three items; however, she later changed the definition of a minimal list to a list that contains two items.

Lists are a common feature of the medieval Welsh and Irish traditions: *Culhwch ac Olwen* contains some excellent examples of long lists; the lists in the *Four Branches* tend to be shorter in nature, but no less interesting in the way they affect the narrative. The Irish narrative tradition is rich in lists, too; in some tales, they are reminiscent of the

⁵⁵⁶ Elizabeth Jackson, “‘Not simply lists’”, 342.

⁵⁵⁷ For a detailed discussion, see Elizabeth Jackson, “‘Not simply lists’”, 343-44.

⁵⁵⁸ Elizabeth Jackson, “The art of the list-maker and the *Grímnismál* Catalogue of the homes of the gods: a reply to Jan de Vries”, *Arkiv för nordisk filologi* 110 (1995), 5-39, referenced in Elizabeth Jackson, “‘Not simply lists’”, 338.

lists in the *Four Branches*, while in others, they resemble the lists in *Culhwch ac Olwen* in terms of length.

As mentioned in the above discussion of onomastic tales, Ó hUiginn views lists in *Táin Bó Cúailnge* as a variation of onomastic material. *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, like many other tales from both the Irish and the Welsh traditions, contains several lists such as lists of personal names, lists of place names, lists of objects. Some of these are fairly short, while others are considerably longer. Like Jackson in her earlier work, Ó hUiginn seems to count three-item lists as minimal lists, giving an example of a short list in *Táin Bó Cúailnge* that contains only three items.⁵⁵⁹ For the purpose of this research project, the following principle has been adopted: three is the minimum number of names/objects that constitute a list, unless two names/objects are prefixed by a (flexible) formula that obviously indicates that a list follows (such as ‘these were the X who/that did Y’).

Some of the tales examined for the present research project contain several lists, some of which are of considerable length. Not all lists come in the typical list-form, namely in the form of a number of names or objects that form a chunk of narrative. Some lists are broken up by extra information such as for example (short) embedded tales or sections of dialogue. Such incremental imparting of the information makes a list less obvious and possibly less easy to spot, yet it seems that the effect of such an incremental list on the narrative can differ from the effect of a straightforward list that simply enumerates items or names, as different examples will demonstrate.

⁵⁵⁹ The three sons of Gárach and their charioteers (*TBC I* 908-10); Ruairí Ó hUiginn, “The background and development of *Táin Bó Cúailnge* - Onomastic material”, J. P. Mallory (ed.), *Aspects of the Táin*, 42.

V.1.5 The Watchman device

The use of this literary device is documented already in the works of Homer⁵⁶⁰ and in classical Greek drama.⁵⁶¹ It has been commonly used by several classical and modern playwrights⁵⁶² to overcome the physical constraints of the theatre, which make it impossible to stage an event that requires a large number of actors on stage at the same time (for example battles or revolts), or for events which it is impossible (or near impossible) to show on stage, such as for example beheadings. The technical term for it, *teichoskopia*, or ‘watching from the walls’, is translated into English as ‘the watchman device’. The watchman device features strongly in Old Irish narrative, and is also present in some of the Welsh texts, one of which is examined in the present research project (*Branwen*). Thurneysen wrote,

[i]n den längeren Sagen fehlt fast nie das Motiv, daß ein Späher oder Bote die nahenden Feinde oder einen heranfahrenden Krieger beschreibt, ohne ihn selber zu kennen. Aus seinem Bericht erkennt dann ein Kundiger, wer der Beschriebene ist, und nennt ihn mit Namen. [...] Man trifft Nachahmungen in der kymrischen Erzählung von Branwen und in der isländischen Laxdæla Saga, Kap. 63.⁵⁶³

In essence, the watchman device is a description of events or persons given by a person who sees, or has seen them, to another person who does not or has not seen them. Patrick Sims-Williams pointed out that the intended recipient of such a report is usually the reader or audience, as opposed to the other person in the narrative. A number of scholars

⁵⁶⁰ For example the *Iliad*.

⁵⁶¹ For example *Phoenician Women* by Euripides.

⁵⁶² For example, Heinrich von Kleist, *Penthesilea*; William Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida* to name but two.

⁵⁶³ Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 61.

The motif of a spy or a messenger who describes the approaching enemy or oncoming warriors without knowing them himself is rarely absent in the longer sagas. Then, a knowledgeable person recognizes the persons described and names them. [...] Imitations can be found in the Welsh tale *Branwen* and in the Icelandic saga *Laxdæla*, chapter 63. (Translation mine.)

have attempted to explain the origins of the watchman device in the Irish tradition: Thurneysen⁵⁶⁴ suggested Homer's Iliad (Book III) as the original source of the Irish borrowing; James Carney, accepting the ultimate origin of the watchmen device as Iliad, but mediated through (unspecified) Latin texts.⁵⁶⁵ Sims-Williams, however, presents a convincing argument based on the linguistic obstacles and the lack of evidence of literary borrowings from the Greek tradition in the early Irish literature (which Carney was aware of) and draws attention to the fact that the Homeric watchman device and the Irish watchman device have much more in common than the examples quoted by Carney. W. B. Stanford⁵⁶⁶ suggests the possibility of the resemblance being coincidental and developed independently, stemming from life; however, Sims-Williams and Carney remain skeptical about his argument that the similarities are coincidental. Sims-Williams suggested that since the pre-history of the Homeric watchman device was oral, the Irish counterpart could have the same oral origin. After examining several examples of the watchman device from different traditions including Persian and Norse, he concludes:

it is most probable that the watchman device was disseminated orally among early story-tellers, Greek, Persian, Scandinavian, and Celtic.⁵⁶⁷

Sims-Williams observes that *Branwen* and certain Irish sagas contain a development of the regular 'realistic' watchman device: he terms this an 'erroneous watchman device', namely examples of the watchman device where "the initial description (which is also in effect an identification) is erroneous".⁵⁶⁸ It seems that such examples did not happen by

⁵⁶⁴ Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 61.

⁵⁶⁵ James Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History*, Dublin, 1955, 306.

⁵⁶⁶ W. B. Stanford, "Towards a History of Classical Influences in Ireland" *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*. 70, (1970), 32-3.

⁵⁶⁷ Patrick Sims Williams, "Riddling", 93. (Revised version in *Irish Influence on Medieval Welsh Literature* (Oxford, 2011), Chapter 5; quotation on page 106.)

⁵⁶⁸ Patrick Sims Williams, "Riddling", 93. (Revised version in *Irish Influence*, p.107.)

coincidence in the Irish tradition; Sims-Williams theorizes that it may well have resulted from a contamination with a different narrative device, the so-called “device of alternative explanations of some unusual phenomenon followed by the true interpretation”.⁵⁶⁹ The ‘erroneous watchman device’ seems to be only found in *Branwen* and in some Irish sagas such as *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*; Sims-Williams concludes that it is possible that it was invented by the Insular Celtic tradition and that it was common to both early Welsh and Irish storytelling traditions.

V.1.6 Taboos, *geasa* and *cynneddfau*

The concepts of taboos and *geasa* (sg. *geis*) are similar, yet not identical. Nowadays, a taboo is a prohibition of certain activities on the basis of the society’s moral or religious rules. Taboos are prone to change with times and vary from society to society. In some medieval societies, the concept of taboo was strongly present. The Irish concept of *geis*

was a prohibition forbidding a person to do, or enjoining him to do certain things. In the oldest Irish tales the meaning of *geis* seems to have been limited to an injunction against doing a specific thing, “a rule of prohibition under penalty of ill luck for its infraction...” or “an absolute prohibition from doing certain things”.⁵⁷⁰

Geasa can be connected with very personal injunctions (such as Cú Chulainn’s prohibition from eating the flesh of dogs, and other name taboos that occur elsewhere in

⁵⁶⁹ The term stems from P. L. Henry; for a detailed discussion, see Patrick Sims Williams, “Riddling”, 95.

⁵⁷⁰ Margaret W. Pepperdene, “Grendel’s *Geis*”, *The Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries in Ireland*, Vol. 85, No. 2 (1955), 189. Pepperdene quotes Robert Atkinson, (ed.), *The Book of Leinster*, Dublin 1880, “Preface”, 27, and Myles Dillon, *Early Irish Literature*, Chicago, 1948, xv.

Irish, for example the story of Tadhg (<**tazgos* ‘badger’) mac Céin who could not eat badger flesh⁵⁷¹), injunctions connected with certain places or times of the year, or they can be imposed on a person by another person or by a supernatural entity. J. R. Reinhard⁵⁷² defined *geis* as a command (to do or not do a certain thing) and connected it with the concept of honour, as did Rudolf Thurneysen.⁵⁷³ John Koch loosely translates the word *geis* as ‘taboo, ritual injunction’, and ascribes to the taboo the function of “motivating apparently irrational, heroic or foolish action, destructive to the protagonist”.⁵⁷⁴ The origins of *geis* are uncertain; according to David Greene,⁵⁷⁵ an equivalent to Irish *geis* cannot be found in the Bible,⁵⁷⁶ nor in what little secular literature was available through the medium of Latin in the 7th century.

DIL offers the following definitions:

Geis, gs. *geisi*, ?*gessi*, np. *Gessi*, *geisi*, ap. *gesse*, *geisse*, *geis*. In early Mod. Lit. pl. *geasa*. Connected with ‘*guidid*’ prays.

(a) a tabu, a prohibition, the infraction (‘coll’ ‘milliud’) of which involved disastrous consequences. Sometimes these ‘*gessi*’ were fortuitous, originating in the fact that a certain course of action had produced disastrous results in the past, sometimes they were rules of honour or prudent abstention, often they rested on deep-seated primitive beliefs and ideas. Such tabus might be attached to a rank or office, e.g. the tabus laid on the king of Tara and on some of the provincial kings [...] More often they were restrictions on an individual, either owing to the predictions of druids or soothsayers that certain actions would bring ill-luck, or

⁵⁷¹ See Alan Mac an Bhaird, “Varia II: Tadhg mac Céin and the badgers”, *Ériu* 31 (1980), 150-55. I am indebted to Dr. Simon Rodway for providing me with this reference.

⁵⁷² J. R. Reinhard, *The Survival of Geis in Medieval Romance*, Halle, 1933.

⁵⁷³ Rudolf Thurneysen, *Heldensage*, 80.

⁵⁷⁴ John T. Koch, *Celtic Culture: a Historical Encyclopedia*, (5 volumes), Santa Barbara, Oxford, 2006, 796.

⁵⁷⁵ David Greene, “Tabu in early Irish narrative”, Hans Bekker-Nielsen, Peter Foote, Andreas Haarder, Preben Meulengracht Sørensen (eds.), *Medieval Narrative: a Symposium*. Odensee, 1979, 11.

⁵⁷⁶ John Koch, however, allows the possibility, saying that examples from the Bible are quite common and well known. See John T. Koch, *Celtic Culture*, 797.

imposed on him by another who had power to punish their violation, or who trusted to his sense of honour or his fear. [...]

(b) a positive injunction or demand [...] Gen. *a solemn* adjuration, command or prohibition from one person to another with imprecations or threats of misfortune in case of refusal (the ordinary sense in romantic lit.) [...] Hence of the imprecations or ill-luck which follow the disregard of the 'geis' [...]

(c) something unlawful or forbidden; a wrong [...]

(d) a spell, an incantation [...]

(e) exact meaning doubtful [...] ⁵⁷⁷

In earlier sources, *geis* seems to have been generally imposed upon the king, ⁵⁷⁸ often by a supernatural being. ⁵⁷⁹ With time, however, it progressed to the stage where a *geis* could be imposed on a non-royal person, by any other person. The connection with honour seems to have remained in most cases. *Geis*-like elements in this thesis include prophecy and self-imposed injunctions.

Taboo (sometimes spelled 'tabu') is defined by the anthropologist Margaret Mead as

a prohibition whose infringement results in an automatic penalty without human or superhuman mediation. ⁵⁸⁰

The penalty for breaking a taboo, according to Mead, is always death. ⁵⁸¹ Greene observes that a broken *geis* does not necessarily result in death. James Carney ⁵⁸² noted that *geasa*

⁵⁷⁷ *DIL*, 56-7.

⁵⁷⁸ See Margaret Mead, "Tabu", in *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, Volume VII, 502. David Greene, using this quote in his article "Tabu in Early Irish Narrative" (14), does not give the source; however, the source is quoted in Franz Steiner, *Taboo*, Harmondsworth, 1956, 22 and 142ff, which enabled me to identify and check it. I am grateful to Dr. Marged Haycock for her assistance with finding the source of this quote.

⁵⁷⁹ Margaret W. Pepperdene, "Grendel's geis", 190.

⁵⁸⁰ Quoted in David Greene, "Tabu", 9.

can in older contexts correspond to the meaning of taboo and can therefore be translated as such with adequate accuracy, but that in later contexts, where they transformed in meaning from negative to positive, this translation is no longer appropriate. Taboos (Welsh: *cynneddfau*; the term is equivalent to ‘special attributes’) in the medieval Welsh texts do not always correspond exactly with the Irish concept of *geasa*; Greene argued that

the *geis* is specific to Irish and, to the extent that Welsh shows anything similar, it is probably due to borrowing from Ireland.⁵⁸³

As with most other possible borrowings from Irish, however, there does not seem to be enough proof to definitely confirm or deny such theories.⁵⁸⁴ It might be argued that ‘peculiarities’ and *cynneddfau* are related to taboo; there is a difference in specificity in that taboos tend to be more generally applied, whereas ‘peculiarities’ and *cynneddfau* refer to one person. GPC gives the following entry for the Welsh word, *kynnedyf*:

Cynneddf [cyn + deddf] eb. ll. cynneddfau.

(a) dawn neu allu cynhenid i synhwyro a gweithredu, un o deithi'r meddwl megis y cof, y deall, &c., cynhysgaeth (meddwl neu gymeriad); priodoled (gynhenid), ansawdd, priodoled hynod, hynodrwydd, nodwedd neu gamp arbennig; ansawdd foesol, un o deithi cymeriad; anian, natur; arfer, moes; cymhwyster; cyflwr; rhinwedd: *faculty, natural endowment; attribute, quality, peculiarity, characteristic; moral quality, trait of character; nature, disposition; custom, usage, practice, habit; qualification; condition; virtue.*

(b) cyfraith, deddf; defod, seremoni; *law, statute; rite, ceremony.*⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸¹ See David Greene, “Tabu”, 10.

⁵⁸² James Carney, *Studies in Irish Literature and History*, 193.

⁵⁸³ Greene, “Tabu”. 9.

⁵⁸⁴ In general, see Patrick Sims-Williams, *Irish Influence*.

⁵⁸⁵ GPC, 795.

Ifor Williams⁵⁸⁶ emphasized that *kynnedyf* meant *hynoddrwydd*, ‘peculiarity’, as opposed to the modern meaning of *cynnedf* ‘faculty’. *Kynnedyf* occurs twice in the *Four Branches*, once in *Pwyll* and once in *Branwen*:

"Arglwyd," heb un o'r llys, "kynnedyf yr orssed yw, pa dylyedauc bynnac a eistedo arnei, nat a odyo heb un o'r deupeth, ay kymriw neu archolleu, neu ynteu a welei ryweddawt."⁵⁸⁷

"Arglwyd," heb y wyrda, "ti a wdost kynnedyf yr auon, ny eill neb uynet drwydi, nyt oes bont arnei hitheu. [...]"⁵⁸⁸

On both occasions, the word *kynnedyf* is translated as ‘strange thing’.

In *Math*, Aranrhod uses the word *tynged* when she imposes a curse on Lleu. *GPC* offers the following definition:

tynged eb.g. ll. tynghedau, tynghedion: yr hyn a dynghedwyd, (grym sy'n rhagderfynu) cwrs anochel digwyddiadau, ffawd; proffwydoliaeth, darogan, tesni; hefyd yn ffig.: destiny, fate, lot; prophecy, prediction, fortune; also fig.⁵⁸⁹

Tynged occurs four times in the *Four Branches*, in a single narrative, namely *Math*:

"Ie," heb hi, "mi a dynghaf dyghet idaw, na chaffo enw yny caffo y genhyf i."⁵⁹⁰

"Ie," heb hitheu, "minheu a dyghaf dyghet y'r mab hwnn, na chaffo arueu byth yny gwiscof i ymdanaw."⁵⁹¹

⁵⁸⁶ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 121.

⁵⁸⁷ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 9.

“Lord,” said one of the court, “the strange thing about the mound is that whatever nobleman sits on it will not leave there without one of two things happening: either he will be wounded or injured, or else he will see something wonderful.” (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 8)

⁵⁸⁸ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 40.

“Lord,” said his noblemen, “you know the strange thing about the river, no one can sail across it, nor is there a bridge. [...]” (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 29-30)

⁵⁸⁹ *GPC*, 3672.

⁵⁹⁰ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 79.

“Well,” she said, “I will swear a destiny that he shall not get a name until he gets one from me.” (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 55)

⁵⁹¹ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 81.

“Well,” she said, “I will swear a destiny on this boy that he shall never get weapons until I arm him myself.” (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 57)

"Dygyuor," heb ynteu, "y dorri dy dynghetuen am dy uab, ac y geissaw arueu idaw."⁵⁹²

"A mi a dynghaf dynghet idaw," heb hi, "na chaffo wreic uyth, o'r genedyl yssyd ar y dayar honn yr awr honn."⁵⁹³

Geis and *kynnedyf* and *dy(n)ghet* are in a way similar, yet there is an important difference between them. The Welsh concept does not seem to have a close connection with the concept of honour, and does not seem to have the same function or motivation behind it as the Irish concept. There is evidence that both *kynnedyf* and *tynged* in Welsh and *geis* in Irish can be imposed on a person by another person; all of them tend towards prohibition without explanation.

V.1.7 Poetry

Poetry occurs more often in the selected Irish texts than it does in the selected Welsh texts. In medieval Welsh prose, poetry occurs in the form of *englynion* (sg. *englyn*), and there are only a few examples of them:

[o]nly six *englynion* are found in the oldest strata of the prose tales, five in the *Pedeir Keinc* and one in *Kulhwch ac Olwen*.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹² Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 83.

"An uprising to break your fate on your son," he said, "and to get weapons for him." (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 58)

⁵⁹³ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 83.

"And I will swear a destiny on him," she said, "that he will never have a wife from the race that is on this earth at present." (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 58)

⁵⁹⁴ Jenny Rowland, "Prose setting of the early Welsh englynion chwedlonol", *Ériu* 36 (1985), 31.

Ifor Williams argued that saga *englynion* are the remnants of tales that were originally a combination of verse and prose, where only the verse as the unchangeable component, and not the prose, was preserved in writing. The prose narrative would have had the function of background. This theory was rejected by Patrick Ford and reconsidered by several scholars including Proinsias Mac Cana,⁵⁹⁵ Brynley Roberts⁵⁹⁶ and Jenny Rowland.⁵⁹⁷ Jenny Rowland argues that the *englynion* in *Math* are of a later date than the saga *englynion*, yet earlier than their prose setting. She also demonstrated that their function in the prose tales is different from that of the saga *englynion*, which is

“to express personal emotion, or else for dramatic dialogue”⁵⁹⁸ [...] This antiquarian verse, like the triads, story titles, and genealogies quoted in the *Pedeir Keinc*, demonstrates that the *cyfarwydd* was fully accredited and knew more material than the story in progress.⁵⁹⁹

Rowland noted that the first *englyn* in *Math* was antiquarian, as well as possibly the one in *Branwen*. The other *englynion* in *Math* bear similarities to the *englynion* of the saga type; however, they are the four-line type, which was not the type of *englynion* normally used for sagas. The possible origin of these *englynion* is immaterial to the present discussion and is therefore excluded from it.⁶⁰⁰

Medieval Irish prose, specifically the selected eight tales, in comparison, is rich in poetry; according to Muireann Ní Bhrolcháin, poetry could indeed be “essential to the

⁵⁹⁵ See Proinsias Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, 132-41.

⁵⁹⁶ See Brynley Roberts, “Rhai o Gerddi Ymddiddan Llyfr Du Caerfyrddin”, in R. Bromwich and Brynley Jones (eds.), *Astudiaethau ar yr Hengerdd*, Cardiff, 1978, 281-325.

⁵⁹⁷ See Jenny Rowland, *Early Welsh Saga Poetry*, 260-61; also “The Prose Setting of the Early Welsh *Englynion Chwedlonol*”, *Ériu*, 36 (1985), 29-43.

⁵⁹⁸ Ifor Williams, “The poems of Llywarch Hen”, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 28 (1932), 130, quoted in Jenny Rowland, *Saga Poetry*, 263.

⁵⁹⁹ Jenny Rowland, *Saga Poetry*, 263.

⁶⁰⁰ For a discussion on the possible origin of the *englynion* in *Math*, see Jenny Rowland, *Saga Poetry*, 264-5.

storytelling”⁶⁰¹ and it is possible that this tradition of prosimetrum (a combination of poetry and prose) developed independently from the story-telling. Full narrative texts in verse are non-existent before the 12th century; however, when poetry is used in prose narrative texts, it usually has a specific function: to mark dramatic responses to events and situations, for greetings, and prophecy. Muireann Ní Bhrolcháin writes,

[s]ometimes it is difficult to tell poetry from prose as in the section at the end of *The Love-Sickness of Cú Chulainn* where the three-way conversation between Cú Chulainn, his wife Emer and his lover Fann has been interpreted by one editor as prose and by others as poetry. [...] Sometimes the narrative is ‘no more than a frame to the picture’, much like the prose in the story of Liadan and Cuirithir.⁶⁰²

It is indeed difficult to recognize poetry in a prose narrative when the redactor interpreted it as prose. This is the case in Van Hamel’s edition of *AOA*, where the whole text is rendered as prose. In such cases, poetic passages have been excluded from the present discussion.

Medieval Irish narratives often contain passages of *roscada* (sg. *rosc*)⁶⁰³. *Rosc* is a special category between prose and poetry. According to Fergus Kelly, it “usually refers to a non-syllabic alliterative type of verse.”⁶⁰⁴ There has been a certain amount of

⁶⁰¹ Muireann Ní Bhrolcháin, *An Introduction to Early Irish Literature*, Dublin, 2009, 140.

⁶⁰² Muireann Ní Bhrolcháin, *An Introduction*, 140. Ní Bhrolcháin quotes from Proinsias Mac Cana, *Learned Tales*, 21.

⁶⁰³ *Rosc* is archaic-sounding semi-verse often used in the early Irish literary tradition. For a definition and discussion of *rosc*, see Liam Breatnach, ‘Canon Law and Secular Law in Early Ireland: The Significance of *Bretha Nemed*’, *Peritia*, 3 (1984), 439-59 (pp. 452-53). I am indebted to Dr. Simon Rodway for pointing me in direction of this article, and for all his remarks on *rosc*.

⁶⁰⁴ Fergus Kelly, *A Guide to Early Irish Law* (Dublin, 1988), 196.

disagreement regarding the phenomenon of *rosc*.⁶⁰⁵ Generally, *rosc* is characterized by its non-metrical style, alliteration and it relies on stress-count.⁶⁰⁶

⁶⁰⁵ See Johan Corthals, “Early Irish retoirics and their Late Antique background”, *CMCS* 31 (Summer 1996), 17-36, for more details.

⁶⁰⁶ See also John Carey, “The rhetoric of ‘Echtrae Chonlai’”, *CMCS* 30 (Winter 1005), 41-65, especially page 49.

V.2 Defamiliarization elements in the *Four Branches*

V.2.1 *Pwyll*

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1	■	Prohibition against striking a supernatural opponent twice
2	■	The same prohibition reinforced
3	■	Onomastic tale: Pwyll Pen Annwfn
4	■	Peculiarity: Gorsedd Arberth and its magic properties
5	■	Onomastic tale: Badger in the Bag
6	■	Onomastic tale: Gwri Wallt Euryn
7	■	Onomastic tale: Pryderi

Pwyll contains seven elements of defamiliarization in total: two prohibitions, one peculiarity that is connected with a geographical area, and four onomastic tales. One of the prohibitions included (concerning the prohibition of striking a supernatural opponent twice) occurs twice in the same episode, which brings the sum total of defamiliarization elements to seven. The second time, the prohibition occurs in a slightly arbitrary, less than natural way, since there seems to be no need for its reinforcement in the narrative.



The arrangement of the defamiliarization elements is fairly equal among the episodes and does not seem to occur in any obvious or particularly significant pattern. In each of the three episodes one climax has a defamiliarization element: in the first one, the defamiliarization element occurs at the second climax and is, interestingly enough, the above-mentioned repeated prohibition. The second and the third episodes both have onomastic tales occurring at their climaxes. It is impossible to say with certainty if the positioning of the repeated defamiliarization element is deliberate or entirely coincidental. Perhaps, given that *Pwyll* has an almost perfect structure, the inclusion of a

defamiliarization element at a single climax of each episode may have been part of this perfection, or perhaps one could see in it the striving for perfection. However, in the absence of a very defined pattern of arrangement of defamiliarization elements, such a speculation is too forced and unfounded, especially because the other four defamiliarization elements occur rather randomly on the curve of the graph: during the rise and the fall in tension, during both the exposition and the dénouement.

The defamiliarization elements used in *Pwyll* seem mainly to fulfil the function of adding interest to the narrative, offering an explanation of certain aspects of the narrative and possibly preserving some of the native lore. Because they are all relatively short and spaced well apart, they do not slow down the narrative or affect its speed and flow in any particular way.

V.2.2 *Branwen*

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1		List of the men who are on the rock with Bendigeidfran
2		Character peculiarity: Nysien and Efnysien
3		Triad: The Three Chief Maidens
4		List of messengers who go after Matholwch (for the first time)
5		Triad: The Three Chief Maidens (repeated)
6		List of messengers who go after Matholwch (for the second time)
7		List of gifts Bendigeidfran offers Matholwch
8		Peculiarity: the magic properties of the Cauldron of Rebirth
9		Onomastic tale: Talebolion
10		Onomastic tale: Lake of the Cauldron
11		Onomastic tale: Saith Marchog
12		List: the seven men left behind
13		Watchman device
14		<i>Cynneddf</i> : Bendigeidfran is too big for any ship.
15		Onomastic tale: let he who is leader be bridge (proverb)
16		<i>Cynneddf</i> : Bendigeidfran cannot be contained in a house.
17		Poetry (englyn)
18		Character peculiarity: Efnysien's character (reinforced)
19		List: the seven men who escaped
20		Prohibition of opening the door, imposed on the men by Bendigeidfran
21		Triad: The Three People Who Broke Their Hearts From Sorrow (TYP 95)

22	■	Prohibition about not opening the door repeated
23	■	Onomastic tale: The Assembly of the Noble head
24	■	Onomastic tale: the Assembly of Branwen and Matholwch
25	■	Triad: The Three Fortunate Concealments
26	■	Triad: The Three Unfortunate Disclosures
27	■	Onomastic tale: the men who set from Ireland
28	■	Onomastic tale: the division of Ireland into five provinces
29	■	Triad: The Three Unfortunate Blows
30	■	List: what has been told in the narrative
31	■	Embedded tale (unusually long): the history of the Cauldron of Rebirth.
32	■	Embedded tale (pseudo-history): the five women of Ireland.

Branwen boasts a considerably larger number of defamiliarization elements than Pwyll. There are thirty-two of them altogether, and this number breaks down into five different triads (one of which occurs twice), seven lists, eight onomastic tales, two embedded tales (which actually function as two sub-episodes), five taboo-like elements (two of which are repeated), one example of poetry in the form of an englyn, and one example of the watchman device. Like in Pwyll, they are randomly positioned throughout the narrative without exhibiting a pattern. Given the large number of them, in fact, they seem to be divided between the three episodes in a rather unbalanced way; a third of them namely occur in the third episode, which is both inferior in length and underdeveloped.

The defamiliarization elements also seem to occur with great regularity in the middle of the first episode, and fairly regularly towards the middle of the second episode.

Branwen is the only one of the examined Welsh texts that contains an example of the watchman device. Patrick Sims-Williams⁶⁰⁷ describes this type of watchman device as ‘erroneous’ watchman device because it contains an erroneous description.

The function of the defamiliarization elements in *Branwen* seems to range from that of adding extra information (for example about the character of Efnysien, the importance of Branwen as one of the three chief maidens), providing geographical reference points (onomastic references to Talebolion, the Lake of the Cauldron), strengthening the connection with another culture in the narrative (in this case, the first connection with Ireland is Branwen’s marriage to Matholwch; this connection is reinforced by other references to Ireland in the two embedded tales), providing some pseudo-history (the explanation of the division of Ireland into five provinces), to purely aesthetic enhancement of the narrative in terms of tragic elements (such as for example the triads relating the three people who broke their hearts from sorrow and the three unfortunate blows).












With the exception of the two embedded tales, all the defamiliarization elements are rather short and not greatly elaborated upon. Some of them seem to be included to draw attention to the great knowledge that the author/redactor/performer possessed: this

⁶⁰⁷ See Patrick Sims-Williams, “Riddling treatment of the ‘watchman device’ in *Branwen* and *Togail Bruidne Da Derga*, 93 ff.

is achieved by a mere mention of a triad or onomastic tale without a lengthy, drawn-out explanation. Like in *Pwyll*, these short elements do not negatively affect the flow of the narrative. The two embedded tales, which are considerably longer and more independent, affect the flow of the narrative somewhat in that they shift the focus from Welsh-related matter and events to Ireland (especially the pseudo-history presented in the third episode).

V.2.3 Manawydan

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1		Triad: the Three Undemanding Chieftains (TYP 8)
2		Onomastic tale inside the triad: <i>lledyf</i>
3		Peculiarity (implied): Gorsedd Arberth
4		List of things that have disappeared
5		Onomastic tale: Llasar's enamel
6		Triad: The Three Golden Shoemakers
7		Peculiarity (implied – repeated): Gorsedd Arberth
8		List: the things that the bishop offers Manawydan in exchange for the mouse (incremental)
9		List: Manawydan's requests (incremental)
10		List: Manawydan's crafts
11		Onomastic tale: Mabinogi of the Collar and the Hammer.

Manawydan contains eleven elements of defamiliarization: two triads, four lists, three onomastic tales (one of which is closely connected with the triad of the three undemanding chieftains) and one peculiarity (which occurs twice). About half of them occur in the second episode. The first episode, despite its extremely inferior length, contains two: a triad and an onomastic element inside the triad. With the obvious exception of these two, there are no particular clusters of defamiliarization elements in the narrative. Their positioning is again unorganized and coincidental, and a pattern does not emerge.

As for their function, the triads and onomastic tales are largely aesthetic and enhance the narrative and the characters; the lists, however, add to the narrative greatly by increasing the tension, first by providing the sense of barrenness and isolation by enumerating everything that disappeared, and later on by emphasizing the value of the life of the ‘mouse’ and the lives and return of Pryderi and Rhiannon by the incremental listing of the bishop’s offers and Manawydan’s demands. The final onomastic tale attempts to provide an alternative title for the narrative. Most of the defamiliarization elements in Manawydan have a positive effect on the narrative in terms of aesthetic contribution and arousing the interest in the reader.

V.2.4 Math

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1		List: Pryderi's <i>cantrefs</i> .
2		<i>Cynneddf</i> : Math must have his feet in the lap of a virgin unless there is a war.
3		<i>Cynneddf</i> : Math hears any whispering that goes on between people, regardless of how quiet it is.
4		Onomastic tale: <i>hob/moch</i> .
5		List: gifts that Gwydion conjures up to give Pryderi in exchange for the pigs from Annwfn.
6		List: Gifts that Gwydion offers Pryderi.
7		Onomastic tale: Mochdref 1.
8		Onomastic tale: Mochdref 2.
9		Onomastic tale: Mochnant.
10		Onomastic tale: Mochdref 3.
11		Onomastic tale: Creuwriwn.
12		List: hostages.
13		Poetry: <i>englyn</i> .
14		Onomastic tale: Dylan Ail Ton.
15		Embedded tale: Dylan.
16		Triad: The Three Unfortunate Blows.
17		<i>Tynged</i> : Aranrhod swears the first curse on the boy.
18		Onomastic tale: Lleu Llaw Gyffes
19		<i>Tynged</i> : Aranrhod swears the second curse on the boy.
20		Triad: The Three Golden Shoemakers

21		<i>Tynged</i> : Aranrhod swears the third curse on the boy.
22		List: flowers out of which the maiden was conjured up.
23		Onomastic tale: Blodeuedd.
24		<i>Cynneddf</i> : Lleu Llaw Gyffes can only be killed if certain conditions are fulfilled.
25		<i>Cynneddf</i> regarding Lleu's death (repeated).
26		Poetry: <i>englyn</i> .
27		Poetry: <i>englyn</i> .
28		Poetry: <i>englyn</i> .
29		Onomastic tale: Blodeuwedd.
30		Onomastic tale: <i>tylluan</i> .
31		List: what Gronw offers Lleu as compensation
32		Triad: The Three Disloyal Retinues.
33		Onomastic: Llech Gronw.
34		List of <i>tynghedau</i> (incremental).

The narrative of *Math* is rich in defamiliarization elements. There are thirty-four of them: three triads, six lists, twelve onomastic tales, a single embedded tale, eight taboo-like elements, and four *englynion*. The graph shows some evidence of clustering of the defamiliarization elements, for example the cluster of five onomastic tales just before the first climax of the first episode, at the first climax of the second episode, and at the end of the first sub-episode of the third episode, where there are the three *englynion* that

occur one after another. Apart from the occasional cluster, the elements occur fairly regularly, with no discernible pattern and no significant gaps in their positioning.

The onomastic tales explaining the origins of place names provide a geographical reference which would undoubtedly have added to the perception of the reader/audience in the Middle Ages (as well as to the perception of a contemporary reader with a good-enough knowledge of the geography of Wales). Three different explanations are offered for three different places called Mochdref, which shows off the knowledge of the creator of the tale. The onomastic tales explaining personal names add to the aesthetic quality of the narrative by evoking images and associations in the reader. The taboos add mystery and the opportunity for the conflict to develop. All four *englynion*, like the one in *Branwen*, are connected with speech, therefore communication. The embedded tale of Dylan Ail Ton adds interest and draws attention to the other tales of the Welsh narrative tradition. Unfortunately, the tale of Dylan has not been preserved independently.⁶⁰⁸

Looking at the graph, one is surprised to find that even clusters of the defamiliarization elements do not slow down the flow of the narrative. Such an effect would be expected especially where five onomastic tales are clustered together one after another without any breaks between them, yet because of their length (they are very short), the narrative flows on without changing its speed. The defamiliarization elements in *Math* add extra information, local colour, interest, an aesthetic component, textual












⁶⁰⁸ There is, however, a reference to it the *Book of Taliesin*: in *Cad Goddau*, *Mabgyfreu Taliesin*, *Kadeir Teyrnon*, and *Marwnat Dylan Eil Ton*. A reference to his grave occurs in *Englynion y Beddau*. For a detailed discussion of the references to the characters from the *Four Branches*, see Ian Hughes, “The Four Branches of the Mabinogi and medieval Welsh poetry”, *Studi Celtici*, Vol. IV (2006), 155-193.

motivation and intrigue. They also preserve other material, although this may not have been their original intention.

V.3 Defamiliarization in the selected Irish narratives

V.3.1 Compert Con Culainn

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1 	List: the warriors who were in the chariots going after the birds (along with Conchobor and Deichtine)
2 	List: the places over which the birds fly.
3 	Onomastic tale: Cú Chulainn.
4 	Rosc.
5 	List: the people who wanted to bring up Cú Chulainn (incremental).
6 	List: Sencha's qualities.
7 	<i>Geis</i> -like injunction: inside the list: a sage must speak before the king.
8 	List: Bláí Briugu's qualities.
9 	List: Fergus's qualities.
10 	List: Amorgen's qualities.
11 	List: those who will rear Cú Chulainn, and their tasks (incremental)

Compert Con Culainn contains eight lists, one onomastic tale, one *geis*-like injunction and one example of *rosc*, a total of eleven defamiliarization elements. The majority of them occur towards the end of the tale. Again, there is no organized pattern to the defamiliarization elements of this tale. *Rosc* occurs where the characters speak. The onomastic tale relating how Cú Chulainn got his name references another tale, namely the part of *Táin Bó Cúailnge* that describes his boyhood deeds. The list of place names

provides the wider geographical reference, while the lists of the characteristics, or qualities of individual characters contribute to characterization and evoke interest in the reader regarding the rest of the Ulster Cycle, where they appear. Despite the somewhat repetitive quality to those lists, the narrative does not suffer any negative effects towards the end where they occur. This is due to the reasonable length of the lists and the fact that they tend to give relevant information rather than distract the reader's attention. The overall function of the defamiliarization elements in *Compert Con Culainn* is to keep the reader interested and to add information.

V.3.2 *Aided Óenfir Aife*

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













1 	Embedded tale: how Cú Chulainn's only son was begotten.
2 	<i>Geis</i> -like injunction: Let no man put [Connla] off the road, let him not make himself known to any man, nor refuse combat to any.
3 	List: the men Condere says Connla should turn to.
4 	Onomastic tale: Tracht Eisi.

Aided Óenfir Aife, possibly the shortest text among the selected tales, has the smallest number of defamiliarization elements: one list, one onomastic tale, one embedded tale, and one *geis*-like injunction. All four of them seem to be evenly spaced between the exposition and the climax, with none at all occurring between the climax and the dénouement. Therefore, despite the even spacing, no other specific pattern can be identified.























The embedded tale establishes a connection with another tale of the Ulster Cycle, namely *Tochmarc Emire*, thus adding extra information and drawing attention to the bigger literary picture of the Irish tradition, namely a narrative outside this particular narrative. The *geis*-like injunction facilitates the development of the conflict, while the onomastic tale arouses interest and adds to the colourfulness of the description. None of the four defamiliarization elements disturbs the flow of the narrative; this is, again, due to their limited length and small number, especially in the case of the embedded tale.























V.3.3 *Tochmarc Emire*





















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1		List: All the good things about Conchobor's reign.
2		List: the precious metals and ornaments on Conchobor's bed.
3		List: the attributes of the warriors.
4		List: the goings-on in Conchobor's house (entertainment).
5		List: the feats the warriors performed.
6		List: the names of the warriors who performed the feats.
7		Onomastic tale: Belocch Bairdine.
8		Onomastic tale: Scél.
9		List: the reasons why the women of Ulaid loved Cú Chulainn.
10		List: the physical attributes of Cú Chulainn.
11		List: the gifts of Cú Chulainn.
12		List: the faults of Cú Chulainn.
13		List: the types of women who would be suitable to be Cú Chulainn's wife.
14		List: what the daughters of the lords who lived around Forgall's dún were learning from Emer, his daughter.
15		List: the six gifts of Emer.
16		List: Cú Chulainn's requirements regarding the woman who would be his wife.
17		List: the noises that the maidens heard when the chariot approached.
18		Watchman device.
19		List within watchman device: the attributes of the two horses.

20	■	List within watchman device: the attributes of the grey horse.
21	■	List within watchman device: the attributes of the other horse.
22	■	List within watchman device: Cú Chulainn's apparel.
23	■	List within watchman device: Cú Chulainn's physical attributes.
24	■	List within watchman device: Cú Chulainn's weapons.
25	■	List within watchman device: the charioteer's attributes.
26	■	List: place names describing the way Cú Chulainn went.
27	■	List: the account of Emer.
28	■	List: the names of the champions who follow Emer.
29	■	List: the account of Forgall.
30	■	List: the strength of Cú Chulainn.
31	■	List: the people among whom Cú Chulainn was reared.
32	■	List: what Cú Chulainn does (his deeds, strong points).
33	■	List: the virtues of Emer.
34	■	List: the tasks Emer sets Cú Chulainn (incremental)
35	■	Onomastic tale: Emain Macha 1.
36	■	List: the names of the kings who reigned over Ireland.
37	■	List: the guarantors between Ugaine and Dithorba.
38	■	Onomastic tale: Emain Macha 2.
39	■	List within the onomastic tale: the names of the sons of Dithorba.
40	■	List within the onomastic tale: the punishment the men endured for the rape of Macha.
41	■	<i>Geis</i> -like injunction: on the chariot to the end of three weeks for

		any man who enters it after he has eaten horse flesh.
42		Onomastic tale: da Sliab
43		Onomastic tale: teme marai
44		Onomastic tale: Mag Muirthemne.
45		Onomastic tale: Amrun feur nDea.
46		Onomastic tale: di aech nEmnai/Uanabh.
47		Embedded tale: how the Dagda gave the land to the Morrígan.
48		Onomastic tale: Druim na Marmuice/Druimne Breg.
49		Onomastic tale: Dam Dile.
50		Onomastic tale: Bressal Bófháith.
51		Onomastic tale: Bóann.
52		Onomastic tale: Cletech/Fésse.
53		Onomastic tale: Síd Cirine.
54		Onomastic tale: Ráith Gniad.
55		Onomastic tale: Ainge.
56		Onomastic tale: Muinchille.
57		Onomastic tale: Ailbine.
58		Onomastic tale: Taillne.
59		Onomastic tale: nia.
60		Onomastic tale: bandé in catae.
61		List: the tasks Emer set Cú Chulainn (repeated).
62		List: the names of Emer's brothers.
63		Onomastic tale: Samain.

64		Onomastic tale: Oimele.
65		Onomastic tale: Beltine.
66		Onomastic tale: Trogan.
67		List: the men who were praised before Forgall.
68		List: the men who went to Scáthach.
69		Embedded tale: Dornolla.
70		List: the physical attributes of Dornolla.
71		List: the names of the men who went across Alba.
72		List: the names of the men who were unable to pass the vision of Emain Macha.
73		List: Cú Chulainn's feelings.
74		Embedded tale: the lion.
75		Embedded tale: at the house of Ulbeccan Sexa.
76		List: the objects that the youth gave to Cu Chulainn.
77		List: the youth's foretellings for Cu Chulainn.
78		List: the names of the men learning from Scáthach.
79		List: the names of the sons of Scáthach.
80		List: Cú Chulainn's wishes (from Scáthach).
81		Embedded tale: Lugaid.
82		Embedded tale: the war between Aífe and Scáthach.
83		List: the names of the sons of Ilsuanach.
84		List: the names of the sons of Esse Enchinde.
85		List: Cú Chulainn's wishes (from Aífe).

86		<i>Geis</i> -like injunction: imposed by Cú Chulainn on his unborn son.
87		List: the feats that Cú Chulainn learnt from Scáthach.
88		Poetry. (Scáthach's prediction for Cú Chulainn.)
89		List: the names of the men on the ship.
90		List: the names of the men levying the tribute.
91		Embedded tale: the rescue of Ruad's daughter.
92		<i>Geis</i> -like injunction: Cú Chulainn cannot marry a woman whose blood he sucked.
93		Onomastic tale: carpat serra.
94		List: the tasks Cú Chulainn fulfilled.
95		List within a list: the names of Emer's brothers.
96		List within a list: what Cú Chulainn took from Forgall's dún.
97		Onomastic tale within list: Áth Scenmenn.
98		Onomastic tale within list: Glonnáth.
99		Onomastic tale within list: Crúfhóit.
100		Onomastic tale within list: Áth n-Imfúait.
101		List: the animals Cú Chulainn drove to the meadow of Emain.
102		List: the names of the men watching over Cú Chulainn's honour.
103		List: the names of the youths of Emain, the chieftaincy over whom was given to Cú Chulainn.
104		Poem.
105		List within poem.

Tochmarc Emire contains the largest number of defamiliarization elements of all the texts examined in the present research project. There are one hundred and three examples of defamiliarization elements: sixty-one lists, thirty-one onomastic tales, seven embedded tales, three *geis*-like elements, two examples of poetry and one example of the watchman device.

An examination of the graph and the arrangement of the defamiliarization elements on the graph reveals that there are hardly any areas of the narrative that do not have defamiliarization elements attached. Most of them occur on the part of the curve between the exposition and the climax, where the tension is supposed to rise until it is such that the climax is fully developed and inevitable. This part of the curve in *Tochmarc Emire*, however, has a number of ‘plateau’ areas where the tension stalls and the flow of the narrative is obstructed. These areas contain several clusters of defamiliarization elements. The area where there are the biggest clusters (between markers D and F on the graph) is the part of the narrative where Cú Chulainn and Emer conduct a highly coded discussion which Cú Chulainn later relates to his charioteer. This section of the narrative is positively bursting with lists, onomastic tales and embedded tales. They give additional information, local colour and topographical information, and even present alternative accounts from ancient lore. There are, for example, two different onomastic stories explaining the origin of the name of Emain Macha. Presenting multiple versions of onomastic stories is a common phenomenon in the medieval Irish tradition (as well as in the medieval European tradition of etymology), although this is not evidenced by the sample of narratives examined for the purpose of the present research.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the section of the narrative which has just been described as featuring a number of lists, embedded tales and onomastic tales was heavily interpolated during the copying process, or processes, and much material was added. The intention was clearly that of preserving a large amount of additional material, coupled perhaps with the desire to show off the extensive knowledge of the redactor. Other areas of stalled tension caused by excessive use of defamiliarization elements are obvious between markers A and B, G and H, and I and L on the graph. The exposition contains a large number of lists, which slows down the start of the narrative. The part of the narrative where Cú Chulainn's journey to Scáthach is related also contains several lists and some fairly detailed embedded tales that are not always integral to the narrative. Their inclusion causes the narrative, which has already been slowed down considerably by the previous clustering of various defamiliarization elements, to stall even more. These passages are very complex and difficult to follow; they tend to force the reader to attempt to deconstruct the narrative and break it down into smaller sections in order to fully understand its meaning. The narrative branches out in a way that compromises its linearity and would, in the 20th century, function well as hypertext⁶⁰⁹ read on a computer screen.

As with some of the other narratives examined, some of the defamiliarization elements in *Tochmarc Emire* contain further defamiliarization elements. Examples of this are the watchman device (marked with number eighteen on the graph), which contains

⁶⁰⁹ For discussion and definitions of hypertext, see Robert Coover, "The end of books", *The New York Times on the Web*, June 21, 1992. <http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/09/27/specials/coover-end.html>; J. David Bolter, *Writing Space: The Computer, Hypertext, and the History of Writing*. Mahwah, 1990; Paul Delaney and G.P. Landow (eds.), *Hypermedia and Literary Studies*, Massachussets, 1994.

seven lists (marked with numbers nineteen through twenty-five on the graph); a list (marked with number ninety-four on the graph), which contains two additional lists and four onomastic tales; an onomastic tale (marked with number thirty-eight on the graph), which contains two lists. This particular onomastic tale is interesting because it offers a second onomastic explanation for Emain Macha. It follows immediately upon the first onomastic explanation of the name Emain Macha, and is introduced by the following words:

Nó dano is de atá Emain (nó Mag) Macha, amal atá isin scéol sa.⁶¹⁰

This demonstrates that the redactor was aware of the wider context of ancient lore and worked with the intention of preserving as much of it as possible, as well as with that of boasting his knowledge of several different versions of onomastic tales pertaining to one geographical location.⁶¹¹ The phrasing also suggests an extremely interesting degree of self-consciousness⁶¹² in the narrative in terms of being self-reflexive, presenting different points of view on the same topic without taking the responsibility for it; such

⁶¹⁰ Van Hamel, *CCC*, 33.

Or moreover, it is from this that it is Emain Macha, so as it is in this tale. (Translation mine.)

⁶¹¹ Multiple etymologies were encouraged in the Irish tradition, as well as in some other medieval traditions, since it was believed that they revealed different aspects of the concept that was being explored. This sort of etymology is hardly attested in Welsh; an exception from a prologue to one of the Latin recensions of the Welsh laws is discussed by Paul Russell, *Read it in a Glossary: Glossaries and Learned Discourse in Medieval Ireland*, Cambridge, 2008, 7-8, n. 20. Gregory Toner writes about the inclusion of multiple versions of events in *Táin Bó Cúailnge* in his article “The Ulster Cycle: historiography or fiction?”, *CMCS* 40 (Winter 2000), 1-20. I am indebted to Dr. Simon Rodway for the loan of Paul Russell’s pamphlet.



















⁶¹² For a discussion on this twentieth-century literary concept, see Patricia Waugh, *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-conscious Fiction*, 1984. In Anglo-American literary theory, the first traces of self-conscious narrative can be seen in Cervantes’s *Don Quixote* and in some of Shakespeare’s works (*Hamlet*); however, there seems to be some indication that self-conscious narrative may have its roots in much earlier literature. This topic is too extensive to discuss in the present doctoral thesis, and at the same time too important to gloss over without examining several different sources. The existence of self-conscious narrative in the literature of the Middle Ages might turn out to be an important development that could change the established views on metafiction, self-conscious narrative, and narcissistic narrative, and should be researched on its own as a separate project.

responsibility rests with the reader, while the author's responsibility lies in presenting the material from different angles and with different variations that exist.





















The defamiliarization elements in *Tochmarc Emire* are numerous, and fulfil several different functions. The most obvious, prominent, and commonly used are the preservation of the material, the preservation of additional material and presenting different versions of that material, demonstrating the story-teller's skills, knowledge and memory. The narrative resulting from that is extremely complex and almost modern (although not uncommon in the medieval Irish tradition, despite the scarcity of examples in the sample of narratives examined here) in some respects, as mentioned above. The flow of the narrative is interrupted and not smooth due to the large number of the defamiliarization elements included in it. These elements often come in clusters, which causes a slowing down in the narrative and diminishes the suspense.


















V.3.4 *Mesca Ulad*

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1 	Embedded tale: pseudo-history relating story of the division of Ireland by Amorgen.
2 	List within the embedded tale: who got the two parts of Ireland.
3 	List within the embedded tale: the five men left in the land of the Ulaid.
4 	Embedded tale: pseudo-history relating the story of the division of the territory of the Ulaid.
5 	List within the embedded tale: who shared the province with Conchobor.
6 	List: the border places of the territory of the Ulaid.
7 	Lists: compliments to Cú Chulainn.
8 	List: Sencha's guarantors.
9 	List: Cú Chulainn's guarantors.
10 	List: compliments for Findtan.
11 	List (within the previous list): those who never strive against Findtan.
12 	List: Cathbad's guarantors.
13 	List: Findtan's guarantors.
14 	List: the casualties of fighting.
15 	List: the place names denoting where the province prospered.
16 	List: those who attended Findtan's feast.
17 	List: what was prepared for Findtan's guests (assets).
18 	List: Conchobor's arrangement of the drinking house in order

		according to deeds, etc.
19	■	List: who took care of the guests (entertainment).
20	■	List: what was recited (entertainment).
21	■	List: the gifts that were distributed among the guests.
22	■	<i>Geis</i> -like injunction: the Ulaid cannot speak before their king.
23	■	<i>Geis</i> -like injunction: The king cannot speak before his druids.
24	■	List: the places on the route they took to Cú Chulainn's feast.
25	■	List: some geographical features they passed on the way.
26	■	List: the landmarks Cú Chulainn picks.
27	■	Onomastic tale: stables of the horses of the Ulaid.
28	■	List: the men who thought Cú Chulainn was cowardly because he wanted to leave the territory they were in.
29	■	List: the men who drank to celebrate the first month of the son of Ailill and Medb.
30	■	List: the two watchmen.
31	■	Poetry/ <i>rosc</i> .
32	■	Poetry/ <i>rosc</i> .
33	■	Watchman device within the poem/ <i>rosc</i> .
34	■	Poetry/ <i>rosc</i> .
35	■	Watchman device within the poem/ <i>rosc</i> .
36	■	List: the things that fell of their pegs and racks in the hall because of the ferocity of the attack.
37	■	List: to whom the druids went.

38		List: what the druids saw (incremental; extremely long).
39		Watchman device.
40		List: the physical attributes of the first man.
41		List: the arms and clothing of the first man.
42		List: the names of the men that Cú Roí identified.
43		Watchman device.
44		List: the names of the men in the second group that Cú Roí identified.
45		Watchman device.
46		List: the names of the men in the third group that Cú Roí identified.
47		Watchman device.
48		List: the weapons.
49		List: the names of the men in the fourth group that Cú Roí identified.
50		Watchman device.
51		Watchman device.
52		List: the attributes of Triscatail.
53		Watchman device.
54		List: the attributes of Uandchend.
55		List: the fathers of Uanchend.
56		Watchman device.
57		List: the attributes of Rómit.

58		Watchman device.
59		List: the apparel of Blaí.
60		Watchman device.
61		List: Dubthach's weapons.
62		<i>Geis</i> -like element: a cauldron of blood before Dubthach Dóeltenga – otherwise the spear would burn its shaft or the man carrying it.
63		Watchman device.
64		List: the apparel of Sencha Már.
65		<i>Geis</i> -like special attribute: Sencha Már can make peace with three words
66		Watchman device.
67		<i>Geis</i> -like special attribute: Cain Caínrethach gives the judgement his father cannot give.
68		Watchman device.
69		List: the weapons of the three men.
70		List: the names of the three men (doorkeepers) that Cú Roí identified.
71		List: those who were sent to see Gabálglinde.
72		List: what the house should be packed full of (according to the prophecy).
73		List: whom the messengers returned to.
74		List: those who were to entertain and amuse the Ulaid.

75	■	List: what the house was built of.
76	■	List: what was provided for the Ulaid so that they would be comfortable.
77	■	Poetry/ <i>rosc</i> .
78	■	List: the men killed by Triscoth (incremental).
79	■	List: the men whose life the Ulaid spared.
80	■	List: the gifts for Ailill.
81	■	Watchman device
82	■	Watchman device (within poem/ <i>rosc</i>).
83	■	Watchman device (within poetry/ <i>rosc</i>).

Mesca Ulad boasts an impressive number of defamiliarization elements. There are eighty-three of them in total; fifty-three of those are lists, one is an onomastic tale, there are two embedded tales, five *geis*-like elements, four pieces of poetry/*roscada* and eighteen examples of the watchman device. Sims-Williams⁶¹³ compares one of the examples of watchman device in *Mesca Ulad* (marked with number eighty-two on the graph) with the one in *Branwen*, where the watchman provides an erroneous description. The poems in *Mesca Ulad* present a problem, because they seem to combine the function of *rosc* (presenting speech) with the form of poetry, namely, regular syllable-count, end-rhyme, and alliteration. Because of this combination, they are marked as both poetry and

⁶¹³ For a detailed discussion of ‘erroneous’ watchman device in the Irish tradition and for a comparison with *Branwen*, see Patrick Sims-Williams, “Riddling treatment”, 93-98.

roscada in the present thesis. A similar situation occurs in *Longes Mac n-Uislenn*, which is discussed later in this chapter.

The defamiliarization elements on the graph of *Mesca Ulad* are almost everywhere, at least when we look at the part of the text from LL (the beginning). The LU text (ending), which is older, only contains six examples of defamiliarization elements. Admittedly the narrative originating from LL is considerably longer than the narrative originally from LU, but the difference is remarkable. It seems that the redactor of the LL text of *Mesca Ulad* had a great interest in preserving additional material, whereas the redactor of the LU text of *Mesca Ulad* appears to have had the preservation of *Mesca Ulad* itself in mind as his primary goal. This demonstrates that different redactors had different ideas concerning the purpose of written texts.

Two of the embedded tales (marked with numbers one and four) are pseudo-historical and attempt to provide an explanation for the political situation in medieval Ireland regarding the division into provinces. Some of the lists in *Mesca Ulad* are of great length (and by and large incremental), often including descriptions listing the attributes or possessions of a character. The purpose of such lists seems to be mainly a display of the superior knowledge on the part of the story-teller. Some lists contain place names, which provide a geographical framework and landmarks, while those consisting of personal names provide a literary reference to the other narratives of the Ulster Cycle. Some of the defamiliarization elements are contained within other defamiliarization elements; examples of this are the lists marked with numbers two, three and five on the

graph (they appear within two different embedded tales) and the list marked with number nine on the graph (which appears within another list). In four cases, the watchman device appears as part of a poem/*rosc* (these examples are marked with numbers thirty-three, thirty-four, eighty-two and eighty-three on the graph). The watchman device is a means of communication, both with the reader and with the characters in the narrative.

Poetry, apart from adding to the aesthetic of the narrative, also has the function of communication. The *geasa* preserve old lore. The defamiliarization elements in *Mesca Ulad* often occur in clusters. Especially obvious are the clusters around the graph areas G, I and J. These are some of the ‘plateaus’ where the narrative drags on, moving very slowly, and the tension is stalled. This is due to the large number and complex nature of the defamiliarization elements in those areas. The areas where the tension rises and the narrative flows faster tend to have fewer defamiliarization elements attached to them.

















On the whole, the effects of the defamiliarization elements in *Mesca Ulad* are less than positive or desirable. They tend to distract one’s attention from the narrative until it is almost impossible to extract its exact meaning. On the other hand, though, they manipulate the perspective of the reader and force the reader to concentrate on individual elements of the narrative and the way they are fitted together. The perception is thus prolonged in a way similar to that described by Shklovsky.⁶¹⁴ It seems that the Irish tradition sometimes achieved the same effect, although the motivation behind it differed somewhat. The storytellers of the medieval Irish tradition perceived their art and its beauty in terms of intellectual accomplishment which manifested itself through the











⁶¹⁴ See Chapter III for details.

quantity of the material memorized and reproduced; some of them were concerned with preserving as much material as possible, even at the expense of the structure and flow of the narrative.

V.3.5 *Echtra Nerai*

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1 	List: the things that are not in the first house Nera and the dead captive go into.
2 	Onomastic tale – proverb: there is no fire without sparing in it.
3 	List: the things that are not in the second house they go into.
4 	List: the things that were in the third house they went into.
5 	Onomastic tale – proverb: it is no good to have a tub for washing or bathing, or a fire without sparing, or a slop pail in a house after sleeping.
6 	List: the two men Nera saw coming out of the <i>dún</i>
7 	List: the reasons why the two men were trusted by the king to visit the crown in the well.
8 	List: what was found in the <i>síd</i>
9 	List: what Nera took from the <i>síd</i>
10 	List: what Nera was to take from the <i>síd</i> when his people came to destroy it.
11 	List: what Nera was to take from the <i>síd</i> (repeated)
12 	List: the tasks the woman in the <i>síd</i> gives Nera (incremental)
13 	List: Cú Chulainn's <i>geasa</i> .
14 	<i>Geis</i> : no woman should leave Cú Chulainn's land without his knowledge.
15 	<i>Geis</i> : birds should not feed on Cú Chulainn's land unless they left something with him.
16 	<i>Geis</i> : fish should be in the bays unless they fell by Cú Chulainn.

17 	<i>Geis</i> : warriors of another tribe should not be in Cú Chulainn's land without his challenging them, before morning, if they came at night, or before night, if they came in the day.
18 	<i>Geis</i> : every maiden and every single woman in Ulster was in Cú Chulainn's ward until they were ordained for husbands.
19 	<i>Geis</i> -like element: the fairy mounds of Ireland are always open on Samain.
20 	List: the things Nera saw in fair lands where he was.
21 	Onomastic tale: the cow of Aingen.
22 	<i>Rosc</i> .
23 	Onomastic tale: the calf of Aingene.
24 	Embedded tale: what Cú Chulainn saw in the Táin Bó Regamna.
25 	List: what Medb swears she would not do until she sees the two kine fighting.
26 	Triad (not included in Kuno Meyer's edition of triads, but definitely triadic in nature): the Three Wonderful Gifts in Ireland.

The twenty-six defamiliarization elements in *Echtra Nerai* consist of a single triad, twelve lists (one of which occurs twice), four onomastic tales, one embedded tale, six *geasa* (including one *geis*-like element) and one piece of poetry. The single triad is not documented in Kuno Meyer's book *The Triads of Ireland*,⁶¹⁵ yet its form is

⁶¹⁵ Kuno Meyer, *The Triads of Ireland*, Dublin, 1906.

reminiscent of that of the Welsh triads, which is the reason why it is identified as such in the present discussion. It has a head and three limbs:

[i]s hi sin tra in tres issa amra ind-hErinn 7 cetach Loegaire ind-Ard Macho 7
enech Dunluinge la Laigniu hio Cill Daro.⁶¹⁶

This seems to be the only example of a triad (or material that is similar enough to triads to allow such an interpretation of it) in the eight Irish tales selected for the purpose of this research project. It appears to have the function of preserving native lore, as well as enhancing the aesthetic aspect of the narrative.

The arrangement of the defamiliarization elements is rather disorganized, with two large clusters dominating the graph. The first cluster occurs immediately prior to the undeveloped climax of the first episode and consists of three lists and two onomastic tales (both of which are proverbs). The second cluster occurs just prior to the climax in the second episode. This cluster has five lists, six *geasa* (which are extensions of one of the lists, namely number 13 on the graph), two onomastic tales, one embedded tale, and one rosc. The six remaining lists that are not part of either of the clusters appear between them, while the triad appears after the climax in the second episode.

The second episode contains the majority of the defamiliarization elements of *Echtra Nerai*. The only defamiliarization elements in the first episode are the five that appear in the first cluster. This curiously unbalanced organization of the defamiliarization

⁶¹⁶ Kuno Meyer, "EN", 226.












That is the third wonderful gift in Erinn, and the mantle of Loegaire in Armagh, and the shirt of Dunlaingin Leinster in Kildare. (Kuno Meyer, "EN", 227)

elements yields a disorganized pattern where most of the defamiliarization elements occur prior to a climax. The lists in the first cluster do not seem to have any particular function, while the two onomastic tales (proverbs) preserve (and attempt to explain) native lore. The lists between the two clusters are mostly minimal lists that provide information pertaining to the narrative, without any particular function. The *geasa* in the second cluster obscure the narrative somewhat by introducing Cú Chulainn into it; by doing that, however, they draw attention to the large body of narrative featuring Cú Chulainn. The *rosc* facilitates speech.

The effect these defamiliarization elements have on the narrative seems to be uncertain. The flow of the narrative is not perfectly smooth, yet because the defamiliarization elements tend to be short and occur, in the case of the *geasa*, in quick succession, they do not seem to slow the narrative down too much.

V.3.6 Táin Bó Fraéich

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1		List: the gifts Fróech received from his mother's sister.
2		Watchman device.
3		List: the animals Fróech's dogs chased.
4		List: the things that were in the house that Fróech was allocated a quarter of.
5		List: the precious metals that the harps were made out of and the ornaments on the harps.
6		List: the three harpists (the sons of Uaithne)
7		Onomastic tale: how the three harpists got their names,
8		List: the things Ailill demands as Findabair's bride price.
9		List: the things Findabair admires about Fróech while he is bathing in the river.
10		Onomastic tale: Dublind Fráech i m-Breib i tírib Connacht.
11		Onomastic tale: the wailing women
12		List: what was stolen from Fróech while he was away.
13		List: who went with Fróech.
14		List: the places they passed.
15		List: what the warriors of the land fought for.
16		List: what the warriors brought in last time they went plundering.
17		List: what Fróech and Conall took from the court.
18		Onomastic tale: Inber mBicne.
19		Onomastic tale: Trácht mBennchoir.










Nineteen defamiliarization elements are present in *Táin Bó Fraích*. Thirteen of them are lists, five are onomastic tales, and one is an example of the watchman device. Long descriptions, such as for examples those on paragraphs three and seven in *Táin Bó Fraích*, are treated as lists because they effectively list the attributes of the person described.



The defamiliarization elements are arranged on the graph with considerable regularity without a particular pattern. Given the individual lengths of both episodes, the number of the defamiliarization elements per episode is proportionate. A small cluster of defamiliarization elements can be observed in point E on the graph where the narrative is slower, and the tension is somewhat level without a detectable rise. The defamiliarization elements in this cluster are closely connected by the theme of harps: the first one is a list describing the material and ornaments of the harps, the second one is a list of the names of the three harpers and the third one is an onomastic explanation of the harpists' names. These defamiliarization elements seem to have an aesthetic function in terms of enhancing the beauty of the narrative. The three onomastic tales regarding place names attempt to add interest and additional information. The long list of gifts that Fróech received at the beginning shows off the story-teller's ability to memorize and reproduce an enormous amount of information, as well as giving an idea of Fróech's circumstances and his family's wealth. The descriptive list of the house Fróech is offered to stay in serves a similar function. Shorter lists provide information. The watchman device serves to provide information for both the audience and the characters in the narrative.

The flow of the narrative in *Táin Bó Fraích* is not particularly smooth and the tension stalls on several occasions. The defamiliarization elements, however, help the narrative progress and keep the reader's interest. They seem to contribute to the flow of the narrative in a positive way.

V.3.7 Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó

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1		List: the hostels in Ireland.
2		List: the things that were in the house.
3		List: the types of meat in each cauldron.
4		List: the gifts offered in exchange for the hound by the first set of messengers.
5		List: the gifts offered in exchange for the hound by the second set of messengers.
6		<i>Rosc.</i>
7		List: the food that was brought.
8		List: the animals that are in abundance in Leinster.
9		List: the famous warriors who are dead.
10		List: the warriors who think they are better than Cet mac Mágach.
11		Embedded tale within the list: how the Ulaid left behind the wheel, the chariot and the horses.
12		List within the embedded tale within the list: What the Ulaid left behind.
13		Onomastic tale within the list: Lám Gábaid.
14		Embedded tale within the list: Éogan mac Durthacht.
15		Embedded tale within the list: Muinremor mac Gergind.
16		Onomastic tale within the list: Mend mac Sálchada.
17		Embedded tale within the list: Celtchair mac Utechair.
18		Onomastic tale within the list: Cuscraid Mend Macha.
19		Onomastic tale: Mag Ailbe

20		List: the places the men of Connacht passed on their flight.
21		Onomastic tale: Áth Chinn Con i mBiliu.

Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó has twenty-one defamiliarization elements: twelve lists, five onomastic tales, three embedded tales, and one example of *rosc*. Their arrangement on the graph seems to be random, without a regular, organized pattern. Several elements occur in a row at the beginning; in the middle of the rising curve, there is a large cluster of ten defamiliarization elements (a combination of onomastic tales, embedded tales, and lists); the cluster occurs where the rise in tension is not as intensive and the curve takes on a slight decline in its angle.

The many lists in the narrative have several different functions. The list mentioning the other existing hostels in Ireland at the time may provide a wider literary context by evoking the memory of some other tales of the Ulster Cycle (namely *Togail Bruidne Da Derga* and *Togail Bruidne Da Choca*). Descriptive lists provide additional information on the wealth, the situation, and the customs; the lists of warriors add to the tension and to the reader's interest, while at the same time bringing to mind other tales which mentioned some of those warriors, thus once again bringing to attention the vast literary context outside this particular narrative. The list of place names offers a geographical reference.


















The *rosc* occurs where there is a dialogue between Mac Dathó and his wife. The onomastic tales relating to personal names provide additional information about the

characters or their background; the embedded tales have a similar function, except they do not provide explanations for their names. *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó* is interesting in that it has a list (number 10 on the graph, the incremental list of warriors who think they are better warriors than Cet mac Mágach) that contains another list, three onomastic tales and four embedded tales within it. One of the embedded tales (number eleven on the graph) contains another list (number twelve on the graph). All of these occur in the cluster mentioned above.

Neither the onomastic tales nor the embedded tales within the incremental list of warriors are particularly long in themselves, however due to the fact that they appear one after another the narrative slows down and the focus of the narrative shifts. It seems that the tension of the narrative is affected by a combination of the number and length of the defamiliarization elements embedded in it. Compared to the cluster of onomastic tales in *Math*, there is a considerable difference in the length of the onomastic tales. While the onomastic tales in the Irish narratives seem to be somewhat longer than those in the Welsh narratives, the speed of the narrative does not seem to be affected unless several of them are clustered together.

V.3.8 *Longes Mac n-Uislenn*

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1		Poetry/ <i>rosc</i> .
2		Poetry/ <i>rosc</i> .
3		List within the poetry/ <i>rosc</i> : compliments for Cathbad.
4		Poetry/ <i>rosc</i> .
5		List within the poetry/ <i>rosc</i> : the unborn child's attributes.
6		Poetry/ <i>rosc</i> .
7		<i>Geis</i> -like element (prophecy) within the poetry/ <i>rosc</i> : Derdriu will cause destruction, the death of many men of Ulaid, violent deeds, weeping and lamenting; she will perform a violent deed herself and be famous.
8		<i>Geis</i> -like attribute: a female satirist can do whatever she wants.
9		<i>Geis</i> -like injunction (self-imposed): Derdriu says she could only love a man of a certain description.
10		List within the <i>geis</i> : attributes of the only man Derdriu could love.
11		<i>Geis</i> -like attribute: Noísiu's voice.
12		List: the qualities of the three sons of Uisliu.
13		<i>Geis</i> -like element (threat): Derdriu threatens Noísiu with shame and derision if he does not take her with him.
14		List: who the sons of Uisliu set out with.
15		List: the dangerous pursuits that the sons of Uisliu are enjoined to undertake by the king of Scotland.
16		List: the sureties.
17		<i>Geis</i> -like injunction (self-imposed): the sons of Uisliu will not eat

		in Ireland until they have had Conchobor's food (self-imposed).
18	■	List: to whom the story of the killing of the sons of Uisliu is related.
19	■	List: the heroic deeds following the death of the sons of Uisliu.
20	■	List: Derdriu's sorrows.
21	■	Poetry/ <i>rosc</i> .
22	■	List within the poetry/ <i>rosc</i> : Noísiu's attributes that Derdriu loved.
23	■	List within the poetry/ <i>rosc</i> : Derdriu's suffering.
24	■	Poetry/ <i>rosc</i> .
25	■	List within the poetry/ <i>rosc</i> : Noísiu's physical attributes.
26	■	List within the poetry/ <i>rosc</i> : Noísiu's apparel.
27	■	List within the poetry/ <i>rosc</i> : Noísiu's weapons.
28	■	List within the poetry/ <i>rosc</i> : Fergus's faults.
29	■	List: the two men Derdriu hates above all.
30	■	List: titles/themes of the narrative.

Longes Mac n-Uislenn contains thirty defamiliarization elements: of these, eighteen are lists, six are *geis*-like elements and six are poetry/*roscada*. The passages of poetry in *Longes Mac n-Uislenn* are problematic because they exhibit the characteristics of both poetry and *roscada*. They are used when the characters speak, and they are marked with ‘.R.’, which usually denotes *roscada*, or *retóiric* in medieval Irish narratives. However, they exhibit certain regularity in terms of the number of syllables per line, some alliteration and end-rhyme, which are characteristics of poetry. They also

add significantly to the beauty and expression of emotion. For these reasons, they are marked as both poetry and *rosc* here.

The first two episodes of the narrative have a similar number of defamiliarization elements, while the third episode contains the largest number of them of all episodes. No particularly organized pattern seems to be present, except for the fact that all three climaxes have at least one defamiliarization element and that the rest of the defamiliarization elements occur at any point in the plot without discrimination. There is a large cluster of defamiliarization elements just before the climax of the third episode. It comprises eight lists and two poems.

The poems/*roscada* in *Longes Mac n-Uislenn* are fairly long and represent passages of monologue. Some of them also occur as part of the dialogue. Their function is to add an aesthetic quality to the narrative by means of expressing emotions and emphasizing the tragic aspect of the narrative. Without them, the narrative would be much poorer and would possibly also lack depth.

The *geis*-like elements facilitate the development of the climax and give the narrative their direction. The lists tend to be descriptive and contribute significantly to the characterization. Several lists, as well as one *geis*-like element, are contained within other defamiliarization elements: lists marked with numbers three, five, twenty-two, twenty-three, twenty-five, twenty-six, twenty-seven and twenty-eight (on the graph) are all parts of poems/*roscada* that occur in the narrative. The list marked with number ten on the

graph is part of the *geis*-like element Derdriu imposes upon herself with regards to the only man she could love. The *geis*-like element (prophecy) marked with number seven on the graph is also part of a poem/*rosc*. These elements are combined in a way that adds to the aesthetic aspect of the narrative, as well as in a way that, compared to some embedded stories, incorporates additional information in a non-intrusive way.

The defamiliarization elements in *Longes Mac n-Uislenn* have a positive effect on the flow of the narrative in that they contribute importantly to the emotional and aesthetic aspects of it. They do not in any way slow down the narrative, nor do they distract the reader's attention from it. Each and every one of them is essential to the narrative. Some of them, especially the poetry, add a new perspective and dimension to it.

V.4 Observations

The analysis of the results of this chapter offers the following facts and speculations. There does not seem to be any obvious patterns in the arrangement of the defamiliarization elements of individual narratives. Where something similar to a pattern exists in a narrative, it is probably a coincidence rather than the result of a planned arrangement.

There is a great difference in the number of the defamiliarization elements in individual narratives examined here. This seems to be only partly connected to the length of the narrative. The greater the number of the defamiliarization elements and the more substantial the defamiliarization elements, the more complex the narrative seems. Clustering of the defamiliarization elements, especially when they are longer and more descriptive in nature, seems to distract from the narrative and change its focus. Not all defamiliarization elements examined seem to be used to the same degree in both Welsh and Irish traditions.

Triads, which are a common element of the Welsh narrative tradition, seem to be hardly used in the Irish narrative tradition, possibly not at all. This may reflect the different usage of triads in the two traditions.

The Irish narrative tradition exhibits great fondness for the use of embedded tales, which are few in the *Four Branches*. The embedded tales in the Irish tradition are often

fairly substantial, yet not as independent as some of those that are used in the Welsh tradition, for example in *Branwen*.

Lists seem to be a ubiquitous feature in the Irish narrative. They occur with much greater frequency than in the *Four Branches*,⁶¹⁷ and tend to be more substantial.

Incremental lists are present in both traditions, but tend to be shorter in the narratives of the four narratives of the Welsh tradition examined for the purpose of the present thesis.

Poetry (often in the form of *roscada*) also occurs more often in the medieval Irish prose narrative. Its occurrence in the Welsh tradition is limited, and there is a marked difference in the length of the verse. In the Irish material, poetry is used for communication, predominantly with other characters in the narrative (and at the same time with the reader) in the form of a dialogue or monologue; for prophecy or prediction; to express emotions; to reference other material. With few exceptions, the poems/*roscada* are integrated into the narrative and form a necessary part of it. The function of poetry in the *Four Branches* differs somewhat. All five examples in the texts examined are used as a means of communication, although the *englyn* in *Branwen* and the short poem about the sons of Gilfaethwy in *Math* seem to be aimed at the reader rather than at other characters in the narrative. All examples of poetry in the four Welsh narratives examined are integral parts of it and are used to underline the actions that are taken by the characters at the time.

⁶¹⁷ *Culhwch ac Olwen*, however, has some very substantial lists that would not be out of place in any medieval Irish narrative, for example the mini-tales embedded in the list of warriors (Cai's quarrel with Arthur).

The defamiliarization elements examined seem to have various functions. Sometimes, they contribute to the aesthetic quality of the narrative. This is especially true of some examples of poetry (especially in *Longes Mac n-Uislenn*). Poetry within prose narrative is generally used for expression of emotion and for communication (speech or dialogue). Onomastic tales tend to add interest and local colour by providing a geographical grounding or reference to the narrative. They may have made the narrative appear more interesting and relevant to the medieval audience. Embedded tales add interest to the narrative in the form of additional information (sometimes only loosely connected with the narrative), remind the reader of the bigger literary picture, namely of the extensive body of narrative belonging to the Irish narrative tradition (in this case, the Ulster Cycle) or of the culture outside the local narrative tradition (in the case of the *Four Branches*). *Cynneddfau*, *geasa* and related elements seem to add intrigue and motivation to the characters and often facilitate the development of the conflict or events. The watchman device is used for communication with the reader as well as for communication with other characters in the narrative. Lists provide information, sometimes preserving ancient lore; longer lists demonstrate the skills and knowledge of the story-teller. They often seem to contain elements of humour, such as grotesque descriptions. Triads and proverbs (a subdivision of onomastic tales) preserve ancient lore and provide additional information as well as a larger literary frame of reference.

Generally speaking, the main functions of the defamiliarization elements are: aesthetic, geographical grounding and local colour, pseudo-history, additional information, reference to the other material of within a tradition, display of knowledge

and superiority of the artist (be that story-teller, author, or redactor), preservation of lore and material, and presentation of other variants of the same material.

The main difference in the use of the defamiliarization elements within the narratives of the medieval Welsh and Irish traditions examined here seems to be that the Irish tradition is more concerned with the preservation of the material and with openly displaying the skill and knowledge of the story-teller, often at the expense of the flow of the narrative, while the Welsh tradition of the *Four Branches* seems to pay more attention to the structure and flow of the narrative and prefers to display the skill and knowledge by brief references to other material (such as for example the Triads) and brief, concise onomastic explanations. It has to be noted that the *Four Branches* are only one part of the medieval Welsh prose tradition and that the results of the research presented here are not representative of the entire medieval Welsh prose tradition. *Culhwch ac Olwen*, for example, seems to exhibit certain traits similar to the Irish tradition.

The following table recaps the the occurrence of the defamiliarization elements in the narratives analysed.

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STATISTICS**

CHAPTER VI: *INQUIT FORMULAE*⁶¹⁸

Dialogue, in the purest meaning of the term, namely “the speech of characters in any kind of narrative, story or play”,⁶¹⁹ is present in works of fiction of all literary genres, with the possible exception of short short story,⁶²⁰ which in its length does not naturally allow for it, and thus prefers the form of inner monologue. Supreme examples of dialogue (such as Plato’s *Dialogues* or some poems written entirely in the form of dialogue, notably some poems by Dafydd ap Gwilym in Welsh literature) aside, dialogue is a highly important element of any narrative. Not only does it bring characters to life, thus helping and supporting characterisation, but it influences the flow of the story, sometimes painlessly slowing the pace and perhaps uncovering potential new aspects of a situation, sometimes swiftly taking the narrative from one point to another with a single urgent word.

As a means of characterisation, dialogue is indeed a priceless storyteller’s tool. It can reveal subtle information about a character’s educational background, social stratum, age and geographical subtext. Lack of words in a character can often speak almost as loudly as extreme mastery of the spoken word. However, the power of the spoken word

⁶¹⁸ I would like to acknowledge personal communication with Mr. Jehudá Ronén, who delivered a paper with the title “Between narrative and dialogue: syntactical features of signalling speech in narrative in Modern Welsh” at the Edward Lhuyd International Conference in Aberystwyth, July 1, 2009. I missed the paper, but Mr. Ronén kindly gave me a copy of the handout afterwards.

⁶¹⁹ A. J. Cuddon, *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, 219.

⁶²⁰ Short short story (Slovenian ‘črtica’) is a style of prose narrative characterized by its extremely short length. It usually concentrates on a single event and has a very small number of characters. In Anglo-American literary theory, it is also known as ‘micro fiction’, ‘micro-story’, or ‘flash fiction’. Matjaž Kmecl, *Mala literarna teorija*, Ljubljana, 1976.

in a story is by no means to be underestimated: dialogue is certainly an important element of narrative.

VI.1 *Inquit formulae: verba dicendi et sentiendi*

A very direct way of introducing dialogue, or signalling at it, known from the very earliest examples of literature, is the use of what is known in Latin as *oratio recta* (in contrast with *oratio obliqua vel indirecta*) introduced by *verba dicendi et sentiendi* – verbs of saying and feeling:⁶²¹

Dico, aio, narro, ostendo – I tell;

Demonstro, declaro – I declare;

Persuadeo – I persuade;

Scribo, respondeo, doceo, trado, fero, refero – I relate;

Auctor sum – I report;

Affirmo, iuro, coniuro, testor – I call to witness/as witness;

Testis sum, muntio, certiore facio – I testify;

Polliceor, promitto, voveo, minor, simulo – I pretend, make out;

Nego – I deny;

Dissimulo – I ignore, conceal;

Sentio, puto, existimo, arbitror, iudico, opinor – I feel, opine;

Scio, nescio, ignoro, conscius mihi sum, confido – I know/do not know;

Animadverto, video, perspicio, lego, audio, accipio (meaning *reperio*) – I find out, discover;

⁶²¹ See Silvo Kopriva, *Latinska slovnica* (Maribor, 1989), 212-15. (Translation into English mine.)

Cognosco – I realise;

Suspikor – I suspect;

Intellego – I understand;

Certior fio – I ascertain;

Memini, recordor, obliviscor, spero – I remember/forget/hope.

Most of them belong to the group of performative verbs, in that they in their very form convey the nature of the utterance.

Latin abounds in *verba dicendi et sentiendi*. The use of a *verbum dicendi vel sentiendi* is sometimes referred to as an *inquit formula*. *Inquit formulae* tend to be completely inflexible and follow the pattern of theme – rheme, the theme (in the form of the *inquit formula*) being the basis for new information referred to as the rheme. The *inquit formula* may, of course be omitted. In oral tradition and in early written texts, which were still influenced by the norms of expression of the oral tradition, more often than not an *inquit formula* tends to be present, although not necessarily always in a way that would make identification of the speaking party easy or certain⁶²². In English, the most commonly recognised literary pattern is “...”*quoth he*, or an equivalent thereof. In Modern English, there is a host of other verbs such as tell, say, ask, exclaim and others. In Modern Welsh, the *inquit formula* is usually rendered by phrases ‘*ebe*’ (sometimes *ebr*) or ‘*meddai*’.

“Mi welaf,” **ebe** fy mam, “mai newydd drwg sy gynoch chi eto. [...]”⁶²³

⁶²² I am, of course, referring to the quick exchange of dialogue that is so often peppered with ‘ol-sí’ and ‘ol-se’ in so many Irish texts; occasionally, pronouns can ambiguously refer to either of the two speakers, or are mismatched due to corruption of the text, either by scribe or by age/circumstances-related damage.

⁶²³ Daniel Owen, *Hunangofiant Rhys Lewis, Gweinidog Bethel*, Wrexham, 1885, 175.

“I see,” said my mother, “that you have bad news again.” (Translation mine.)

“Ond y mae gennych eich gŵr o hyd,” **ebr** Alis.⁶²⁴

“Yr dydych wedi blino,” **meddai**’r bachgen gan gamfarnu ei brwysgedd.⁶²⁵

Forms of verbs *gofyn* ‘ask’ or *dweud* ‘say’ are common in contemporary Welsh, too, as are other forms of *inquit formulae*:

“Pam na ddaw ef i mewn?” **gofynnodd** Mr. Sheriff.⁶²⁶

Dychrynodd Monica a **dywedodd** yn sydyn: “Pwy piau hi, tybed?”⁶²⁷

Sibrydodd wrtho: “Pictiwr da, onid e?”⁶²⁸

“Be a wn i?” **atebodd** Hannah.⁶²⁹

It is also possible to use adverbial or converbial extensions such as *meddai hi gan weiddi* ‘she shouted’, *ebe ef fel petai* ‘he said as if to...’, and *ebe ef gan ddechrau* ‘he said, starting to...’.

In Modern Welsh, *inquit formula* is occasionally substituted by the use of a preposition following direct speech and introducing the speaker: “...” *oddi wrth* (followed by the subject). Another indirect way, once again more common in Modern Welsh texts, is omitting the *verbum dicendi vel sentiendi* and substituting an independent sentence such as “*y cwestiwn yw*”. Neither of these structures occurs in medieval texts at

⁶²⁴ Saunders Lewis, *Monica*, Bridgend, 1997 (first published 1930), 36.

“But you still have your husband,” said Alis. (Translation mine.)

⁶²⁵ Saunders Lewis, *Monica*, 16.

“You are tired,” said the boy, misjudging her excitement. (Translation mine.)

⁶²⁶ Saunders Lewis, *Monica*, 27.

“Why won’t he come in?” asked Mr. Sheriff. (Translation mine.)

⁶²⁷ Saunders Lewis, *Monica*, 16.

Monica got scared and asked suddenly: “Who does it belong to, then?” (Translation mine.)

⁶²⁸ Saunders Lewis, *Monica*, 16.

She whispered to him: “Good picture, isn’t it?” (Translation mine.)

⁶²⁹ Saunders Lewis, *Monica*, 27.

“What do I know?” answered Hannah. (Translation mine.)

all, and it can, because of their nature, safely be assumed that they are later (ie. modern) structures. On this point, I would add that *meddai* and *ebe* are indeed the most common in contemporary texts, and tend to be used interchangeably in contemporary fiction, with no difference in meaning.

VI.2 *Inquit formulae* in *The Four Branches*: *heb*, **med*, and alternatives

In Medieval Welsh, the situation regarding *inquit formulae* seems, judging by the extant texts, significantly different. The number of indicators present is rather low, and there seems to be an important difference in their usage, which I will discuss in the paragraphs below.

Sioned Davies, in her seminal work on the *Four Branches*, *Crefft y Cyfarwydd*, calculates the percentage of text that is actually dialogue in each of the eleven tales of the Mabinogion. Her calculations⁶³⁰ yield the following results⁶³¹ for *The Four Branches*:

<i>Pwyll</i>	42%
<i>Branwen</i>	39%
<i>Manawydan</i>	43%
<i>Math</i>	37%

⁶³⁰ See Sioned Davies, *Crefft*, 198.

⁶³¹ My research confirms these results.

As can be observed, direct speech makes for a substantial part of the text in each tale. As an aside, I would like to mention that the percentage of dialogue is not necessarily in proportion to the length of the tale, or to characters' loquaciousness, but relates more to the material of individual tales.

The *inquit formula* in *The Four Branches* is, with a few exceptions, represented by *heb*. In all four texts, *heb* (followed by a subject in the form of a pronoun, personal name, or a noun) is without a shadow of doubt the single most commonly used one. There are, however, some alternatives, which I will discuss for each text individually.

The following table presents direct speech indicators used in *The Four Branches of the Mabinogi* (from *Llyfr Gwyn Rhydderch*) and their incidence with spelling variations where applicable:

	<i>Heb</i>	<i>*med</i>	other
<i>Pwyll</i>	187, of which <i>hep</i> : 11	2	<i>dywedyd</i> : 2; <i>gouyn</i> : 1; <i>sef attep a rodes</i> : 1
<i>Branwen</i>	80	1	<i>dywedyd</i> : 2; <i>gouyn</i> : 2; <i>canu</i> : 1
<i>Manawydan</i>	110	-	-
<i>Math</i>	149	-	<i>dywedyd</i> : 1;

			<i>canu: 3</i>
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The placing of *verba dicendi* in the Welsh texts is characteristically in the middle or at the end of a piece of spoken text (“...” *heb ef*; “...”; “...,” *heb ynteu*). This is the only distinctive pattern. The use of *inquit formulae* in *The Four Branches* is extensive, which is understandable, given that the texts in question originate from oral tradition or were produced as written texts in the period when oral tradition was the main and foremost form in which texts of the period appeared. Oral tradition may or may not have a greater need for indicators than written texts; when the story-teller uses different voices, any such external indicators become entirely redundant.⁶³²

⁶³² Later on, with the appearance of dramas and texts written primarily for use in the theatre, indicators changed and were condensed to the use of the name of the character only.

VI.2.1 *Pwyll*

The following chart presents the incidence of different indicators of direct speech in *Pwyll*.



Indicator incidence in *Pwyll*

In *Pwyll*, *heb* occurs 187 times (with a spelling variation *hep*, which occurs 11 times).

“A unben,” heb ef, “mi a wnn pwy wytti, ac ni chyuarchaf i well ti.”⁶³³

“Pa delw,” hep ynteu, “y pryny di?”⁶³⁴

Heb occurs up to three times in a single sentence in *Pwyll*, although this does not seem to be standard or common use:

“Ny weleis ansyberwyt uwy ar wr,” hep ef, “no gyrru yr erchwys dy hun arnaw; hynny,” hep ef, “ansyberwyt oed: a chyn nyt ymdialwyf a thi, y rof i a Duw,” hep ef, “mi a wnaif o anglot itt guerth can carw.”⁶³⁵

⁶³³ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 2.

“Sir,” he said, “I know who you are, but I will not greet you.” (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 3)

⁶³⁴ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 2.

“How will you redeem it?” he replied. (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 4)

⁶³⁵ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 2

“I have seen no greater discourtesy in a man,” he said, “than to drive away the pack that had killed the stag, and feed your own pack on it; that,” he said, “was discourtesy: and although I will not take revenge upon you, between me and God,” he said, “I will bring shame upon you to the value of a hundred stags.” (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 4)

In *A Grammar of Middle Welsh*, D. Simon Evans explains that *hebyr*, *heby*, *heb* ‘said’ is “commonly used in reporting conversation, *hebyr* being used before vowels, *heby* before consonants”. Interestingly, he gives a list of some very common performative verbs in which *heb-*, the root of the verbal noun *hebu* ‘to speak’ occurs: *atdeb*, *gwrtheb*, *goheb(u)*.⁶³⁶ None of these performative verbs, which are so common in contemporary spoken Welsh, features in the *Four Branches* as a variant of the *inquit formula* in its own right.

Very rarely, there is no indicator of the speaker (other than the context itself), in a section of a dialogue where the exchange of words happens just as quickly or swiftly as in sections where an *inquit formula* is repeated again and again:

“Mi a baraf,” hep yr Arawn, “na bo i’th gyuoeth na gwr na gwreic a wyppo na bo tidi wwyf i. A miui a af i’th le di.” “Yn llawenn,” hep y Pwyll, “a miui a af ragof.” “Dilesteir uyd dy hynt ac ny russya dim ragot, yny delych y’ m kyuoeth i: a mi a uydaf hebryngyat arnat.”⁶³⁷

In oral tradition, the presence of the *inquit formula* is usually expected for the benefit of the audience, who might, unless there are other indicators that the speaker has changed (such as a visual clue, musical interlude, or a change in the narrator’s voice), find it hard to follow the shift from one speaker to another. In non-oral tradition, that is, of course, superfluous, as identifying the speakers at the beginning of a dialogue is sufficient, and

⁶³⁶ D. Simon Evans, *A Grammar of Middle Welsh* (Dublin, 1964), 154.

⁶³⁷ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 3.

“I shall arrange that no man or woman in your realm realizes that I am not you, and I will take your place,” said Arawn. “Gladly,” said Pwyll, “and I will go on my way.” “Your path will be smooth, and nothing will hinder you until you get to my land, and I will escort you.” (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 5)

printer's marks are present in the form of quotation marks or a direct speech dash to mark each individual section of the dialogue.

In three of the texts which belong to *The Four Branches*, there is a handful of special cases of indicators of direct speech to be mentioned. These depart from the traditional, expected single-fold *inquit formula* that is common in medieval Welsh texts. In *Pwyll*, there is an interesting double use of *verba dicendi et sentiendi* in a single utterance:

Ac yna y dywot ef wrth y wreic, "Arglwydes," heb ef, "na chapla di uiui. Y rof i a Duw," heb ynteu, "ni chyskeis inheu gyt a thi, yr blwydyn y neithwyr, ac ni orwedeis."⁶³⁸

The verb *dywedyd*, which is one of the most direct of the *verba dicendi* (and whose equivalent is extremely common in Latin texts), is followed by the preposition *wrth* to indicate the specific audience to which the speech is addressed. It is used side by side with the traditional *inquit formula* 'heb' with no difference in meaning. However, it was by no means common for it to replace or complement *heb* in the *Four Branches*. (This practice, however, was not uncommon elsewhere in Middle Welsh.) Examples such as this might have been early attempts at altering the formula, at changing the tradition, at enriching the expression. In the following example in the same text, only a few pages prior to the above example, *dywedyd* occurs on its own:

A phan daruu udunt y bwyd Pwyll a dywot, "Mae yr yniuer y buom ni doe ac echtoe ym penn yr orssed?"⁶³⁹

⁶³⁸ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 7.

And then he said to his wife, "Lady," he said, "do not blame me. Between me and God," he said, "I have neither slept nor lain with you for the past year." (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 7)

⁶³⁹ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 11.

Here *dywedyd* is used in place of ‘*heb ef*’, the addressees are not specified (although obvious from the context) and the inflexible ‘*heb*’ is absent.

A brief remark is needed here to point out another occurrence of *dywedyd* in *Pwyll*, this time an independent one in the role of a full lexical verb, albeit not as a proper *inquit* formula. In the following extract, there is an interesting use of direct speech within direct speech, in a part where Rhiannon instructs Pwyll what to say to Gwawl. Note that the word ‘*dywet*’, ‘*dywedut*’ is used to indicate Pwyll’s future action, and as such not as a pure *verbum dicendi* in itself, whereas ‘*heb hi*’ is again the basic *verbum dicendi* indicating the speaker.

A miui a rodaf y wled y’r teulu a’r niuerod,” heb hi, “a hwnnw uyd dy attep am hynny. Amdanaf innheu,” heb hi, “mi a wnaef oet ac ef, ulwydyn y heno, y gyscu gennyf; ac ym penn y ulwydyn,” heb hi, “byd ditheu a’r got honn genhyt, ar dy ganuet marchawc yn y perllan uhot. A phan uo ef ar perued y digrifwch a’y gyuedach, dyret titheu dy hun ymywn a dillat reudus amdanat, a’r got y’th law,” heb hi, “ac nac arch dim namyn lloneit y got o uwyt. Minheu,” heb hi, “a baraf, bei dottit yssyd yn y seith cantref hynn o uwyt a llynn yndi, na bydei launach no chynt. A guedy byryer llawer yndi, ef a ouyn yt, ‘A uyd llawn dy got to uyth?’ Dywed titheu, ‘Na uyd, ony chyuyt dylydauc tra chyuoethauc, a guascu a’y deudroet y bwyt yn y got, a dywedut, ‘Digawn rydodet ymman.’ A minheu a baraf idaw ef uynet y sseghi y bwyt yn y got. A phan el ef, tro ditheu y got, yny el ef dros y pen yn y got. Ac yna llad glwm ar garryeu y got. A bit corn canu da am dy uynwyl, a phan uo ef yn rwymedic yn y got, dot titheu lef ar dy gorn, a bit hynny yn arwyd y rot a’th uarchogyon; pan glywhont llef dy gorn, diskynnent wynteu am ben y llys.”⁶⁴⁰

When they had finished eating, Pwyll said, “Where are those who were with me yesterday and the day before on top of the mound?” (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 10)

⁶⁴⁰ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 14-15.

“But I will give the feast to the retinue and the men,” she said, “and that will be your answer on the matter. As for me,” she said, “I will arrange a meeting, a year from tonight, for him to sleep with me; and at the end of the year,” she said, “you be in the orchard up there, with ninety-nine horsemen, and have this bag with you. And when he is in the middle of his entertainment and carousing, come in on your own wearing ragged clothes, and carrying the bag,” she said, and ask for nothing but to fill the bag with food. I’ll see to it,” she said, “that if all the food and drink in these seven cantrefs were put into it, it would be no fuller than before. And when they have thrown a great deal into it, he will ask you, ‘Will your bag ever be full?’ You say, ‘No, unless an extremely powerful nobleman gets up and treads down the food in the bag with both

Evidently, the author here was fully aware of the meaning and potential of the verb *dywedyd* (MW *dywetyt*) and perhaps decided to make use of it, as demonstrated in one of the previous examples.⁶⁴¹

In *Pwyll*, there are two instances of ‘*gouynnei*’ used as a *verbum dicendi* in its own right, instead of *heb*:

Ac mal y delei pob un o’e niuer ynteu y mywn, y trawei pob un dynawt ar y got, ac y gouynnei, “Beth yssyd ymma?” “Broch,” medynt wynteu. Sef kyfryw chware a wneynt, taraw a wnaï pob un dynawt ar y got, ae a’e droet ae a throssawl; ac yuelly guare a’r got a wnaethont. Pawb ual y delei, a ouynnei, “Pa chware a wnewch chwi uelly?” “Guare broch yg got,” medynt wynteu.⁶⁴²

In all other cases in *Pwyll*, ‘*ask*’ was simply represented by *heb*. Note also how ‘*medynt*’ is used in place of *heb* in this example. **Med* ‘says’, according to Evans,

is commonly used in citing authors, or in quoting expressions of opinion, often in reply to questions. It may originally have meant ‘judges, thinks’.⁶⁴³

It is very clear from the context that the answer is not the truth but a pre-arranged answer designed to trick. By using a form of the verb **med*,⁶⁴⁴ the author is implying that the

feet, and says, ‘Enough has been put in here’.’ And I will see to it that he goes to tread down the food in the bag. And when he comes, turn the bag so that he goes head over heels in it; then tie a knot in the strings of the bag; have a good hunting-horn around your neck, and when he is tied up in the bag, give a blast on your horn, and let that be a signal between you and your horsemen; when they hear the blast of your horn, let them descend upon the court.” (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 12-13)

⁶⁴¹ The example referred to is Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 7.

⁶⁴² Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 17.

As each one of Pwyll’s men entered, he struck the bag a blow and asked, “What’s in here?” “A badger,” the others said. This is how they played: each one would strike the bag a blow either with his foot or with a stick; and that is how they played with the bag. Each one as he entered would ask, “So what game are you playing?” “Badger in the Bag,” the others would say. And that was the first time that Badger in the Bag was played. (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 14)

⁶⁴³ D. Simon Evans, *Grammar*, 154.

speaker is quoting what he has been told to reply as part of the trick/game. The verb **med* conveys a reporting action on the part of the speaker and at the same time, a distance between him and the utterance, which the traditional *heb* as *inquit formula* could never do. This is important as it proves that the author was highly aware of the different layers he could add to the story by choosing to depart from the standard choice of *inquit formula*. By editing the text in such a subtle way, he could give the recipient of the text additional information without making it too obvious; indeed, the change here is subtle enough that it may have escaped a careless recipient, but at the same time significant enough to alert a careful recipient to the speaker's attitude towards the utterance, and to foreshadow the turn of events that follows in the story.

One last example of *heb* being replaced occurs in the following passage in *Pwyll*:

Sef attep a rodes Pwyll, “Nyt oed achaws ganthunt wy y erchi y mi yscar a’ m gwreic namyn na bydei plant idi. Plant a wnn i y uot idi hi. Ac nyt yscaraf a hi. O gwnaeth hitheu gam, kymeret y phenyt amdanaw.”⁶⁴⁵

In this passage, *heb* is replaced by a phrase ‘*sef attep a rodes*’, ‘this is the answer that he gave’. It is perhaps noteworthy that the replacement this time is not a different verb but an entire clause, drawing the attention not to Pwyll as the speaker but to what he is about to say, to the contents of the utterance that is to follow. Once again, this shows clever text manipulation skills on the part of either the original author or the final redactor, and his awareness of the different effect that changing the expected can have on the recipient of

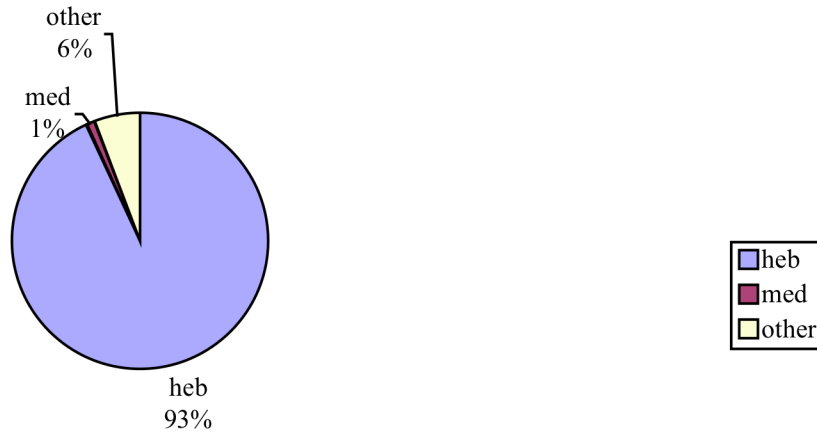
⁶⁴⁴ Meddaf (2): [o’r un gwr. â’r f. fl.; nid oes be., ac ni ddigwydd y f. ond yn y pres. a’r amhff.; fe’i defnyddir wrth ddyfynnu geiriau siaradwr neu awdur nail ai’n uniongyrchol neu’n anuniongyrchol] Ebe, dyna a ddywed(odd, &c.) (ef, &c.): *say (I, &c.), says (he, &c.), said (I, he, &c.)* (GPC, 2394)

⁶⁴⁵ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 21.

But Pwyll gave this answer: “They have no reason to ask me to divorce my wife, unless she has no children. I know that she has a child, and I will not divorce her. If she has done wrong, let her be punished for it.” (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 17)

the text. Once again, this example is a rarity, and shows an attempt at editing with the purpose of alerting the recipient to the importance of the utterance that follows.

VI.2.2 *Branwen*



Indicator incidence in *Branwen*

In *Branwen*, which is considerably shorter than *Pwyll*, there is proportionally less dialogue; however, the use of *heb* is the same as that in *Pwyll*. *Heb* occurs 80 times and always with the function of the standard *inquit formula*. There are rare examples of direct speech not interrupted or followed by an indicator in the form of a *verbum dicendi*, and one multiple use of *heb* in a single sentence. The same holds true for *inquit formulae* in *Manawydan* and *Math*, which are, as far as the use of *heb* is concerned, very traditional and predictable.

In *Branwen*, ‘*medei*’ occurs once, and it corresponds exactly to Evans’s definition – namely that of quoting an expression of opinion in reply to a question:

Ac adaw hwnnw, a dodi y law ar un arall a gouyn. “Beth yssyd yma?” “Blawt,” medei y Gwydel. Sef a wnai ynteu yr un guare a fawb ohonunt, hyt nat edewis ef wr byw o’r hollwyr o’r deu kannwr eithyr un. A dyuot at hwnnw, a gouyn, “Beth yssyd yma?” “Blawt, eneit,” heb y Gwydel.⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴⁶ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 42.

This extract is particularly interesting as it contains two practically identical answers followed by two very different indicators. In the first answer, the author deliberately decided to emphasize the fact that there is an element of distance between the speaker and the utterance, whereas in the second answer, the author implies that the speaker has accepted the utterance as his own opinion, not someone else's, purely because the situation does not allow him to do otherwise, thus rendering another use of **med* unnecessary. This is a splendid example of skilful editing which was thought out very carefully by the author, in terms of what the difference between the commonly used verb *heb* and the alternative, **med*, will tell the recipient of the text. It allowed the author, and the character, to take a step away from the utterance and present it as untruth, something he knows to be untrue and wants therefore to distance himself from, and to imply that the reason for giving that particular answer is that he was ordered to do so as part of the conspiracy. This single occurrence of the verb **med* shows that the Welsh author was consciously trying to mark a difference between utterances and the way the speakers related to them. Moreover, he made a conscious attempt to overstep the boundary between spoken and written text – the boundary between the story as oral performance and written text.

The use of *gouyn* 'ask' (in the same example) as a performative verb instead of *heb* must be noted, too. The use of a performative in place of *heb* or **med* is uncommon and

He left that one, and put his hand on another bag and asked, "What have we here?" "Flour, friend," said the Irishman. (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 31)

quite innovative for the period. The verb *dywetyt/dywedyd* occurs once. Another example of a different performative verb occurs in *Branwen* when an *englyn* is sung:

Ac yna canu englyn,-

“Yssit yn y boly hwnn amryw ulawt,
Keimeit, kynniuyeit, diskynneit yn trin,
Rac kydwyr cad barawt.”⁶⁴⁷

The same verb is used three times in *Math*, adequately taking the place of *heb*. The explanation for this is that *englynion* would possibly have been sung, and the association between the two words, *canu* and *englyn* is strong, so they would usually appear together as a set expression.⁶⁴⁸

⁶⁴⁷ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 43.

And then he sang and *englyn*:

“There is in this bag a different kind of flour,
Champions, warriors, attackers in battle,

Against fighters, prepared for combat.” (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 31)

⁶⁴⁸ The verb *canu* is used in rubrics of poems in medieval Welsh MSS (e.g. *Hwn yw e gododin. Aneirin ae cant* (Ifor Williams (ed.), *Canu Aneirin* (Caerdydd, 1961), 1). The Old Irish cognate *canaid* is regularly used to introduce poems in Irish prose texts. In Irish MSS, *cecinit* or *dixit* are sometimes used in rubrics to introduce poems.

VI.2.3 *Manawydan*



Indicator incidence in *Manawydan*

In *Manawydan*, there is only evidence of one indicator, which is the standard *inquit* formula ‘heb’.

“Oy a Duw Hollgyuoethawc, guae ui,” heb ef, “nyt oes neb heb le idaw heno namyn mi.” “Arglywd,” heb y Pryderi, “na uit kyn drymhet genhyt a hynny. Dy geuynderw yssyd urenhin yn Ynys y Kedyrn; a chyn gwnel gameu it,” heb ef, “ny buost hawlwr tir a dayar eiryoet. Trydyd lledyf unben wyt.”⁶⁴⁹

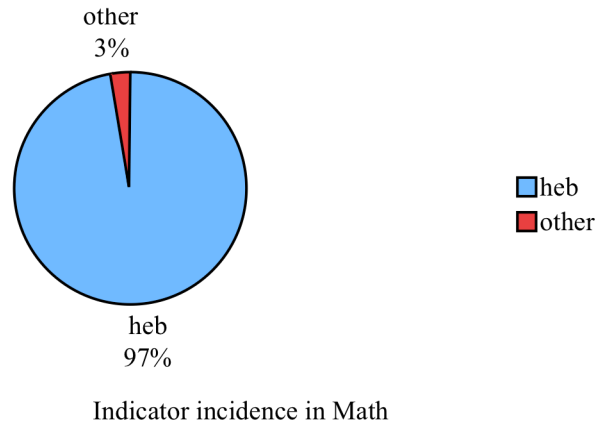
Heb is used throughout the text with no variations or replacements.⁶⁵⁰ In comparison with the other three texts belonging to the Four Branches, *Manawydan* presents a very uniform picture in terms of *inquit formulae*; it only uses *heb* and shows no variety at all regarding *inquit formulae*. This singles it out and points at some very careful work on the part of either the original author, or the final redactor.

⁶⁴⁹ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 49.

“Alas Almighty God, woe is me!” he said. “I am the only one who has no place to go tonight.” “Lord.” Said Pryderi, “do not be so sad. Your cousin Caswallon is king over the Island of the Mighty; and although he has done you wrong,” he said, “you have never claimed land or territory – you are one of the Three Undemanding Chieftains.” (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 35)

⁶⁵⁰ This poses an interesting question as to why this is the case. Is *Manawydan* of a different date than the other three branches? Did the (now lost) Ur-text of *Manawydan* originate from somewhere else and was therefore different enough so that the final redactor (‘author’) of the *Four Branches* did not feel the need to do as much editing as in the he did with the other texts? Was *Manawydan* written by a different person, perhaps one of the redactors, in order to add another narrative to the ones that already existed? These questions, unfortunately, have never been answered, and remain unanswered; they are also outside the scope of this thesis.

VI.2.4 Math



In *Math*, the standard *inquit formula* is used 149 times, while in four cases, two other indicators are used instead.

“A was,” heb ef, “pa derw ytti?” “Paham?” heb ynteu.⁶⁵¹

Heb is used in exactly the same way as in the other three texts, and similarly to *Branwen*, *canu* is used in place of *heb* in connection with *englyn*, three times in a row:

Sef a wnaeth ynteu, medyl yaw y mae Llew oed yr eryr, a chanu englyn: -

“Dar y dyf y rwng deu lenn,
Gurduwrych awyr a glenn.
Ony dywedaf i eu,
O ulodeu lleu ban yw hynn.”

Sef a wnaeth ynteu yr eryr, ymellwng yny oed yg kymerued y prenn. Sef a wnaeth ynteu Wydyon, canu englyn arall: -

“dar a dyf yn ard uaes,
Nis gwlych glaw, mwy tawd nawes.
Ugein angerd a borthes.
Yn y blaen, Llew Llaw Gyffes.”

Ac yna ymellwng idaw ynteu, yny uyd yn y geing issaf o’r pren. Canu englyn idaw ynteu yna: -

“Dar y dyf dan anwaeret,

⁶⁵¹ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 67.

“Lad,” he said, “what has happened to you?” “Why,” said the other [...]. (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 47)

Mirein modur ymywet.
Ony dywedaf i [eu]
Ef dydau Lleu y'm arfet.”⁶⁵²

Again, this is because of the close connection with the word *englyn*, which might not have been spoken but sung. Similarly to *Pwyll*, in *Math*, *dywetyt/dywedyd* is used side by side with *heb* to specify the addressee of the utterance:

Ac yna y gordiwawd Gwydyon hitheu, ac y dywot wrthi, “Ni ladaf i di. Mi a wnaaf yssyd waeth it. Sef yw hynny,” heb ef, dy ellwng yn rith ederyn. [...]”⁶⁵³

Dywedyd is used only once in *Math*, never replacing *heb* as an independent variation of the *inquit formula*. As in the other three branches, *heb* remains the most commonly used direct speech indicator, with only a few examples that deviate from the traditional *inquit formula*.

⁶⁵² Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 89-90.

He thinks that the eagle is Lleu, and sings an *englyn*:

“An oak grows between two lakes,

Very dark is the sky and the valley.

Unless I am mistaken,

This is because of Lleu’s Flowers.”

The eagle lowers himself until he is in the middle of the tree. Gwydion sings another *englyn*:

“An oak grows on a high plain,

Rain does not wet it, heat no longer melts it;

It sustained one who possesses nine-score attributes.

It its top is Lleu Llaw Gyffes.”

And then he lowers himself down until he is on the lowest branch of the tree. Then Gwydion sings him an *englyn*:

“An oak grows on a slope

the refuge of a handsome prince.

Unless I am mistaken

Lleu will come to my lap.” (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 62-3)

⁶⁵³ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 91.

Then Gwydion caught up with her and said to her, “I will not kill you. I will do worse. Namely, I will release you in the form of a bird,” he said. (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 63)

VI.3 *Inquit formulae* in the Irish texts: *ol* and its variants, *as-beir*, and alternatives⁶⁵⁴

In the eight Irish texts relevant to this thesis, the percentage of text rendered as dialogue is as follows:

<i>Mesca Ulad</i>	51%
<i>Echtra Nerai</i>	45%
<i>Aided Óenfir Aífe</i>	53%
<i>Compert Con Culainn</i>	31%
<i>Tochmarc Emire</i>	43%
<i>Táin Bó Fraích</i>	39%
<i>Scéla Mucce Meic Da Thó</i>	42%
<i>Longes Mac n-Uislenn</i>	30%

The percentage of dialogue in the Irish texts is comparable with that in the Welsh texts, although the average is slightly higher (just under 42%, while the average amount of dialogue in the four Welsh texts is just above 40%).

Inquit formulae in the Irish texts tend to follow one main pattern: the vast majority of direct speech indicators appears in the form of *ol* or one of its many variations. *Ol* is a defective verb that, like the Welsh *heb*, corresponds semantically to English ‘says, said, quoth’. The form *ol* was commonly in use throughout the Old Irish period and a great part of the Middle Irish period. An alternative form documented in Milan Glosses is *ar*, while

⁶⁵⁴ I am grateful to Dr. Simon Rodway for his help with Old Irish verb forms, for leading me through Thurneysen’s *Grammar* and for offering useful references throughout this chapter.

in Middle Irish, *ar*, *or*, *for*, *bar* were used side by side with *ol*. In Modern Irish, the only surviving form is *ar*.⁶⁵⁵ With a nominal (noun) subject, *ol* appears on its own. With regard to pronouns, Thurneysen states that

[a] nominative pronoun is also contained in **olse** (later **olsé**) ‘says, said he’, emphatic **olse-som**. The feminine is **olsi** (probably –**sí**) Ml. 90b12, but the plural is formed with the verbal ending: **olseat-som**. Forms with the 1st person, **olmé** (LU 4931, etc.) and **olsmé** (RC. x. 82) ‘inquam’, are found only in later texts. [...] From **olseat** and **cateat**, an independent pron. 3 pl. **eat**, **íat** developed in place of **é** during the ninth century.⁶⁵⁶

The substantival form of the demonstrative pronoun in the nominative occurs only in the form *ol su(i)de* ‘said he’; according to Thurneysen,

[t]here is another form **ol-su(i)de** neut. **ol-sod(a)** [**ditto**], which is rarely found outside the Glosses. This serves to introduce a somewhat independent relative clause, especially one that contradicts or qualifies a preceding statement. [...] The glossators used it to provide a literal translation of the Latin relative, for which Irish has no equivalent.⁶⁵⁷

The forms and variants of *ol* occurring in the selection of Irish texts that I discuss in this thesis are the following ones: *ol*, *oll*, *or*, *ar*, *bar*, *far*, *for*, *al*. Of these, *ol* is by far the most common one, followed (interestingly enough) by *bar*, which is especially common in *Mesca Ulad* (LL text).⁶⁵⁸ *Ol*, or one of its variant spellings, accounts for the vast majority of the *inquit formulae* in the texts examined. Another, less commonly used *inquit formula*, is the verb *as-beir* or one of its variations. *As-beir*, ‘says, speaks’, also occurs as *is-beir*, and is later on, replaced by *at-beir*. It can be followed by a direct object, verbal

⁶⁵⁵ DIL 130.

⁶⁵⁶ Rudolf Thurneysen, *A Grammar of Old Irish*, Dublin, 2003 (first published 1946), 255.

⁶⁵⁷ Thurneysen, *Grammar*, 301.

⁶⁵⁸ The occurrence of indicators in the LU text of *Mesca Ulad* is as follows: 1 example of *or*, 1 example of *as-beir*, 33 examples of *ol*.

clause, or verb-noun clause. It can also be used in the sense of ‘order, command’; it often occurs with prepositions: *fri* (‘says to, calls’), *do* (‘gives as a name, applies to’), *di* (‘calls’), *ó* (‘names from’).⁶⁵⁹

Occasionally, the Latin *dixit* (3rd person singular indicative perfect active of *dico*) occurs; this is a remnant of Latin, which was the main language of literature in Ireland in the 5th century and was very influential for a considerable time after that. It must also be remembered that scribes would have known Latin for many centuries afterwards and that Latin was the main language of the Church, which influenced the production of the Irish manuscripts. When *dixit* occurs in a narrative, it tends to introduce a passage *of rosc*.

The table below presents the various direct speech indicators (*inquit formula* or otherwise) and the number of times they occur in the selected Old Irish texts. *Ol* and its spelling variations are treated as one single indicator, with the number of individual spellings that occur in each tale given in the same window. The first number given relating the incidence of *ol* is the sum total of all spelling variations that occur in an individual tale.

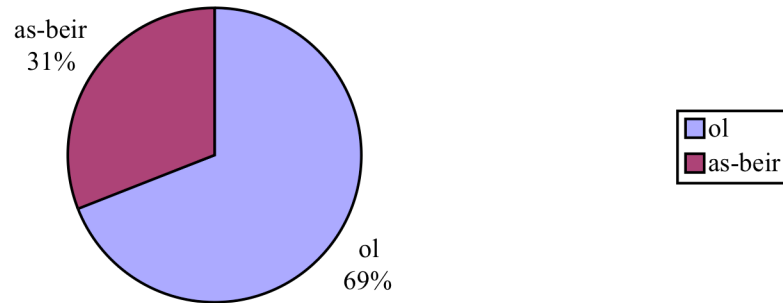
	<i>Ol</i>	<i>as-beir</i>	<i>Dixit</i>	Other
<i>Scéla Mucce</i>	62	2	3	-
<i>Meic Dathó</i>				N.B. Non-verbal: <i>in fer</i>

⁶⁵⁹ *DIL* 53.

				(3), in <i>ben</i> (2)
<i>Táin Bó Fraích</i>	101, of which <i>ar</i> : 2	2	-	-
<i>Compert Con Culainn</i>	9	4	-	-
<i>Aided Óenfir Aífe</i>	34	2	-	-
<i>Tochmarc Emire</i>	92, of which <i>ar</i> : 8; <i>or</i> : 2; <i>for</i> : 2; <i>bar</i> : 1	10	-	<i>Canaid</i> :1
<i>Longes Mac n- Uislenn</i>	28, of which <i>or</i> : 7; <i>ar</i> : 4	5	1	<i>Do-cuirethar</i> : 1
<i>Mesca Ulad</i>	184, of which <i>ar</i> : 94; <i>bar</i> : 36; <i>far</i> : 5; <i>or</i> : 2; <i>for</i> : 1	8	-	<i>Feraid failti</i> : 2; <i>canaid</i> : 1; <i>fris- gair</i> : 1; <i>íarni- foich</i> : 1
<i>Echtra Nerai</i>	55, of which <i>oll</i> : 6; <i>or</i> : 3	6	-	-

As the table illustrates, *ol* (or one of its variation) is the most common among them, and some variants listed as ‘other’ match some of the ones occurring in the Welsh texts.

VI.3.1 *Compert Con Culainn*



Indicator incidence in *Compert Con Culainn*

Ol and *as-beir* are the only two indicators that occur in *Compert Con Culainn*, occurring nine and four times respectively. This short text has the highest incidence of *as-beir* of all the texts considered. Both *ol*⁶⁶⁰ and *as-beir*⁶⁶¹ verbs are used, position-wise, in the same manner as described in the previous texts:

“Gaib duit in mac,” ol Conchubur béos fria fiair.
 “Níba sí nod n-ebbla ém,” ol Sencha, “acht is messe nod n-ailfea, ar am
 trén, am trebar, am án, am athlam athargaib, am ollam, am gáeth.
 [...]”⁶⁶²

Marbaisseom a choin side iarom, in tan ba ngillae oc cluichiu, combu
 iarom asbertsom.⁶⁶³ “Bid meisse do chúso, a phopae.”⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁶⁰ *Ol* occurs on pp. 7 and 8. All page numbers refer to A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*.

⁶⁶¹ *As-beir* occurs on pp. 6 and 7. All page numbers refer to A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*.

⁶⁶² A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*, 7.

“Take the boy with you,” said Conchobar to his sister. “She should not be the one to rear him,” said Sencha, “but it is me who should rear him. I am strong, skilful, fiery, powerful, nimble, a sage, wise. [...]” (Translation mine.)

⁶⁶³ Asbertsom: 3rd ps. Sg. Pret. Act a 3 sg. masc. emphatic particle (see Thurneysen, *op cit*).

⁶⁶⁴ A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*, 6.

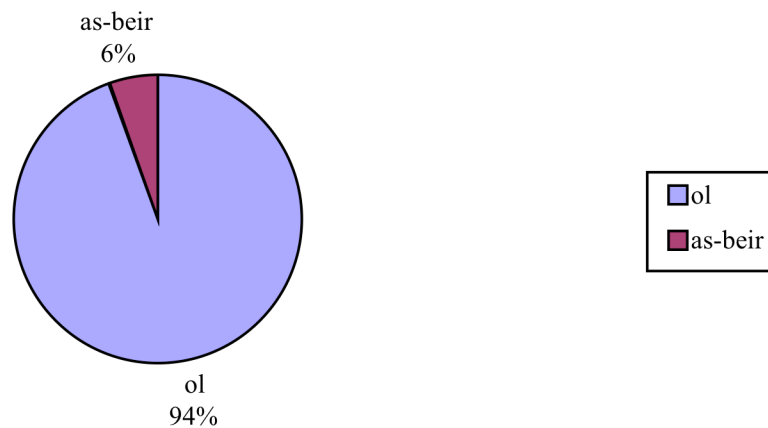
He killed the dog then, when the boy was playing, and that was what he said then: “I will be your dog, o master.” (Translation mine.)

Once, both verbs are used to mark the same utterance, *as-beir* in initial position and *ol* following in final position:

Asbert Conchubur: “Beir duit, a Finnchóem, in mac,” ol Conchubur.⁶⁶⁵

Both verbs here are used side by side with no difference in meaning, and would be, if it were not for their position in the sentence, interchangeable.

VI.3.2 *Aided Óenfir Aife*



Indicator incidence in Aided Oenfir Aife

⁶⁶⁵ A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*, 7.
Conchobar said, “ You take the lad, Finnchoem.” (Translation mine.)

*Ol*⁶⁶⁶ and *as-beir*⁶⁶⁷ are again the only two verbs that feature in *inquit formulae* in *Aided Óenfir Aife*, and they occur 43 times and twice respectively. In some manuscripts, *ol* is rendered as *ar*, which is noted in footnotes to the text.⁶⁶⁸

As-beir occurs in the phrase *is and asbert* on both occasions.

“Cía immaregad Condere?” *ol* cách.
“Ní hansae,” *ol* Conchobar, “cid ciall 7 erlabrae immabera, is Condere as choir and.”⁶⁶⁹

Is and asbert Condere: “Tinta frim, a mo maic. [...]”⁶⁷⁰

Regarding the position and meaning of the two verbs, there is no difference between this text and the text mentioned previously.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ol* occurs on pp. 11-15. All page numbers refer to the text of *AOA* in A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*.

⁶⁶⁷ *As-beir* occurs on pp. 12 and 14. All page numbers refer to the text of *AOA* in A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*.

⁶⁶⁸ See footnotes in *AOA* in A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*, 13, 14.

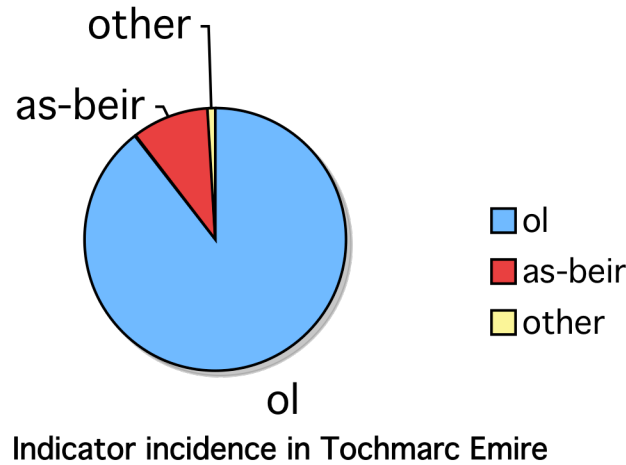
⁶⁶⁹ A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*, 12.

“Why should Condere go?” asked everyone. “Not difficult that,” replied Conchubur, “whatever good sense and eloquence may be required, Condere will possess it.” (Jeffrey Gantz, *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, 149)

⁶⁷⁰ A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*, 12.

[...] Condere said, “Turn to me, my boy.” (Jeffrey Gantz, *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, 149)

VI.3.3 Tochmarc Emire



In *Tochmarc Emire*, an interesting development is to be seen. *Ol*,⁶⁷¹ which occurs 93 times, is still the most commonly used verb in the *inquit formula* (alternative spelling *for/or* is given in other manuscripts on some occasions), along with *as-beir*,⁶⁷² which occurs 10 times, either on its own (*asbert*, *asbertside*, *asbertseom*, *asrubartsi*, *asberar*) or in a phrase such as *is and* (or *ann*) *asbert*:

“Feiced óen úaib,” ol Emer, “cid dotáet inar ndochum.”⁶⁷³

“Cé bu for fess ann,” ol sí.⁶⁷⁴

Conid and asbertseom.⁶⁷⁵ “Cáin in mag so mag alchuing.”⁶⁷⁶

⁶⁷¹ *Ol* occurs on pp. 24, 26-32, 34, 35, 42, 44, 49-52, 54, 55, 61-65. All page numbers refer to the text of *TE* in A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*.

⁶⁷² *As-beir* occurs on pp. 26, 31, 34, 42, 50, 52, 54, 64. All page numbers refer to the text of *TE* in A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*.

⁶⁷³ A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*, 24.

“Let one of you see,” said Emer, “what is it that is coming towards us.” (Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 156)

⁶⁷⁴ A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*, 26.

“What was your food there,” she asked. (Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 157)

⁶⁷⁵ *Asbertseom*: 3rd ps. Sg Pret. Act. with *-seom*.

⁶⁷⁶ A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*, 31.

And he said: “Fair is this plain, the plain of the noble yoke.” (Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 160)

Ol and *as-beir* occur side by side several times,⁶⁷⁷ complementing and reinforcing each other:

Tócbaid Emer a gnúis cáimchruthaig i n-ardai 7 dobeir aichni for Coin Culainn conid ann asbert: “Dess imriadam dúib,” ol sí, .i. Dia do réidiugud dúib.⁶⁷⁸

Is ann asbert in ingen na bríathra so oc frecrea Con Culainn: “Ní rúalae inmag sa,” ol Emer, “nád ruband comainm n-arcait for cach áth ó Áth Scéne Menn for Ollbini cosin mBanchuing n-arcait ara mbruinnend Brea diantos Fedelm.”⁶⁷⁹

Once again, they do not convey any functional or situational difference in introducing the utterance.

The interesting development mentioned earlier is the use of the verb *canaid* ‘sing’ instead of the traditional *inquit formula*:

“Co tánic in Dagdae 7 a lorg anfaid leis cor chan⁶⁸⁰ na briathra sa fris, cor tráig fo chétoir .i.: “Toí do chend cúasachtach, toí do chorp cisachtach, toí do thul taigi baig thaig.”⁶⁸¹

This concept is exactly the same as the one encountered in *Branwen* and *Math*. Again, there is the close connection between the verb and the noun, and they occur together as a

⁶⁷⁷ On pp. 26, 31, 52, 54, 55. All page numbers refer to the text of *TE* in A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*.

⁶⁷⁸ A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*, 26.

Emer lifted up her lovely face and recognized Cu Chulainn, and she said, “May God make smooth the path before you!” (Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 157)

⁶⁷⁹ A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*, 31.

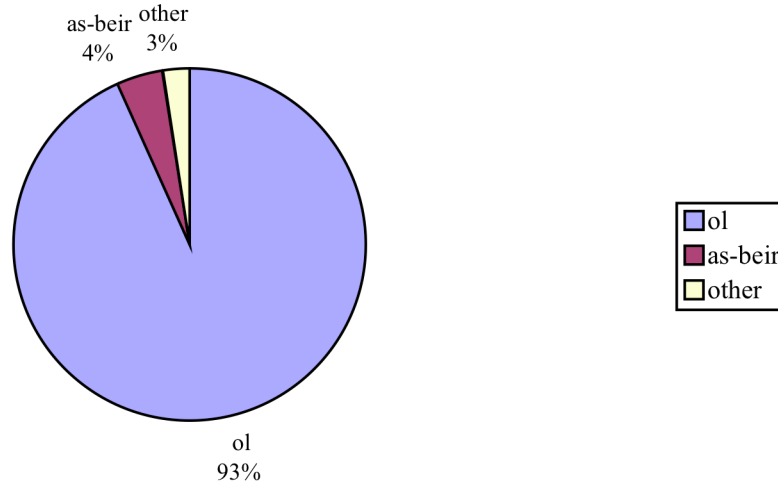
Then the maiden spake these words: “No one comes to this plain who does not slay as many as a hundred on every ford from the Ford of Scenn at Ollbine to Banchuing Arcait, where swift Brea breaks the brow of Fedelm.” (Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 160)

⁶⁸⁰ 3 sg. preterite, see Kim McCone, *The Early Irish Verb*, second edition (Maynooth, 1997), 232.

⁶⁸¹ A. G. Van Hamel, *CCC*, 36. This extract is omitted in the translation by Cross and Slover, but available in Kuno Meyer’s translation: [...] until the Dagda came with his club of anger, and sang the following words at it, so that it ebbed away at once: “Silent thy hollow head, silent thy dirty body, silent thy [...] brow.” (Kuno Meyer, “The Wooing of Emer”, in *Archaeological Review*, volume 1 (1888), 153)

unit. *Canaid* here is used to indicate that the passage that follows is *rosc* and it fulfils the same role as *dixit* in *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*.

VI.3.4 *Mesca Ulad*



Indicator incidence in *Mesca Ulad*

Mesca Ulad boasts an interesting ‘wealth’ of *inquit formulae*: not only does *ol*, with five alternative spellings⁶⁸², occur 184 times, and *as-beir* in four different forms; there are also four alternative variations on the traditional Old Irish *inquit formula*. They are all performative verbs, namely *canaid* ‘sings’, *feraid failti* ‘welcomes’, *fris-gair* ‘answers’, *iarmi-foich* ‘seeks after, inquires about’.

Ra fhirastar⁶⁸³ fáilti⁶⁸⁴ fris: “Mo-chen do thíchtu, a óclaí⁶⁸⁵ álaind amra, a phrímgascedaig ollchúicid Ulad, risna gabat díbergaig ná hanmargaig ná hallmaraig, a fhir ocharimmil chúicid Ulad.”⁶⁸⁵

Is í seo fálti ferastar⁶⁸⁶ fris: “Mo-chen bitchen do thíchtu, a chend sochair slúgaid

⁶⁸² *Ol* itself only occurs in the text from LU; *or* occurs once in the LU text and once in the LL text, while *ar*, *bar*, *far* and *for* feature only in the LL text.

⁶⁸³ *Feraid failti*, ‘welcomes’; *fhirastar*, 3rd. ps. Sg. Ro-pret.

⁶⁸⁴ Accusative (sg.) of *fáilte*

⁶⁸⁵ J. Carmichael Watson, *MU*, 4.

[...] and bade him welcome. “Welcome thy coming, O beautiful, illustrious youth; thou mighty warrior of the great province of Ulster, against whom neither plunderers nor spoilers nor pirates can contend; thou border-man of the province of Ulster.” (Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 217)

⁶⁸⁶ 3rd ps. Sg. preterite

Ulad, a eó gaile 7 gaiscid Gáedel, a meic dil drongaich dornchorcra Dechtini.”⁶⁸⁷

Both forms here derive from *feraid fáilti*, ‘welcomes’.

Et is amlaid ro boí acond éligud ba-cachain⁶⁸⁸ in laid seo:

“A Chruim Darail, cid at-chiu
tresin céo?
Cía forsatá in mana cró
íarsin gléo?”⁶⁸⁹

At-racht grian ra lecnib na hIrlúachra et is amlaid ra buí ‘ca rád 7 ro chachain⁶⁹⁰ in
laid sea, 7 ba-recart⁶⁹¹ Cú Ruí im enrand é don laid:

“At-chíu Lúachair línib slíab,
taitnidgrian tulgorm re taíb;
is óic im-riadat do chéin
etir móin céir acus craíb.”⁶⁹²

This example combines two performative verbs instead of the standard *inquit formula*: *fo-cain* ‘chants’ and *fris-gair* ‘answers’.

Tánic Crom Deróil is tech i rrabi Medb 7 Ailill 7 Cú Ruí 7 Eochu mac Luchtai, 7
bar-íarfacht⁶⁹³ Medb, “Canas tánic int armgrith dar-fánic, inn a haéor anúas no in
dar muir aníar no inn a Hérind anair?”⁶⁹⁴

⁶⁸⁷ J. Carmichael Watson, *MU*, 3.

This is the welcome he offered to him: “Welcome, ever welcome thy coming, thou glorious head of the host of Ulster; thou gem of valour and bravery of the Gael; thou dear, subduing, purple-fisted son of Dechtire.” (Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 216)

⁶⁸⁸ *Ba-cachain*, from 3rd. ps. Sg. Pret. *fo-cain* ‘chants.’

⁶⁸⁹ J. Carmichael Watson, *MU*, 18.

The translation by Cross and Slover omits this part; however, Jeffrey Gantz gives the following: [...] and he recited this poem:

Crom Darail, what do I see

Through the mist?

Whose blood is presaged

After the slaughter? (Jeffrey Gantz, *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, 201)

⁶⁹⁰ *Ro-cachain*, 3rd. pd. Sg. Ro-pret. from *canim* > *canaid*.

⁶⁹¹ *Ba-recart*, 3rd. ps. Sg. Pret. from *fris-gair* ‘answers’. See McCone, *Early Irish Verb*, p. 199 for this form.

⁶⁹² J. Carmichael Watson, *MU*, 20.

Once again, Cross and Slover omit this part, but Gantz gives the following: The sun rose over the slopes of Irlúachair, and he recited this poem:

I see many-hilled Lúachair,

The bright-fronted sun shining against its flanks;

They are youths who travel from afar,

Between the brown moor and the trees. (Jeffrey Gantz, *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, 202)

⁶⁹³ *Bar-íarfacht*: 3rd. ps. Sg. Ro-pret. From *íarfaigid*, *iar-mi-foich* ‘seeks after, inquires’. See McCone, *Early Irish Verb*, p. 199.

Two of these alternatives (*feraid fáilti* and *fo-cain laíd*) are, similarly to the Welsh *canu englyn* in *Branwen* and *Math*, standard phrases the component parts of which would normally occur together because of semantics; the other two, *fris-gair* and *íarmi-foich* indicate interrogative forms but are functionally entirely interchangeable with the standard *inquit formula*.

184 occurrences of *ol*, in six spelling variants, demand some elaboration. *Ol* occurs 46 times, but only in the LU text; in fact, the LU text offers only two spelling variants, the aforementioned *ol* and a single instance of *or*.

“Is messe,” *ol* Triscoth.⁶⁹⁵

“Do-fuil in fer chucut,” or Lóeg.⁶⁹⁶

Previously, *or* occurs only once in the LL text:

“Mas sed,” or Cú Chulainn, “ticed d’ól 7 d’óebinnius limas, ar is í mo fhrithascid.”⁶⁹⁷

This is interesting because *or* is the only variation of *ol* that features in LU text, yet it occurs a single time in the LL text which abounds with other spelling variations. Of those, 94 cases are *ar*,⁶⁹⁸ 36 *bar*,⁶⁹⁹ 5 *far*,⁷⁰⁰ and a single *for*.⁷⁰¹

⁶⁹⁴ J. Carmichael Watson, *MU* 22-23.

Crom Deroil came into the house in which were Medb and Ailill and Cu Roi and Eochaid mac Luchta; and Medb asked whence came the clamor that occurred; whether it was down from the air, or across the sea from the west, or from Erin, from the east. (Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 226)

⁶⁹⁵ J. Carmichael Watson, *MU*, 40.

“’Tis I,” said Triscoth. (Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 233)

⁶⁹⁶ J. Carmichael Watson, *MU*, 46.

“The man approaches thee,” said Loeg. (Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 237)

⁶⁹⁷ J. Carmichael Watson, *MU*, 5.

“If so,” said Cu Chulainn, “let him come to drinking and delight with me; for that is my counter-request.” (Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 218)

“Cía sú?” for Ailill.⁷⁰²

“Is gabtha na eich 7 iss innilti in carpat,” ar Láeg; “nít infhuirig cusin anúair, nadat-torbad dit gaisciud. [...]”⁷⁰³

“Fálti fir connaig ascid sin,” bar Cú Chulainn.⁷⁰⁴

“Ba-géb-sa comarli amra dúib dá lamaind a labra,” far Sencha mac Ailella.⁷⁰⁵

These spelling variations are purely scribal, and as such irrelevant to the present discussion.

As-beir occurs eight times in the role of *inquit*, in four different forms: *atbert*,⁷⁰⁶ *at-rubairt*,⁷⁰⁷ *n-ebairt*,⁷⁰⁸ and *as-breth*.⁷⁰⁹

At-bert in *maccáem ri Coin Culainn*: “In tan atá in cóiced ‘na thopor tuli, tussu ‘ca adgell 7 ‘ca admiliud ar-aí clóechlód óenaidchi.”⁷¹⁰

Is an so at-rubairt⁷¹¹ Cú Chulainn ra Láeg mac Rianganabra, “Érigh remut, a mo phopa Laíg, fairc-siu lett renna aeoir, finta lat ciun ticfa midmedón aidchi, ár it

⁶⁹⁸ *Ar* occurs only in the LL text, 94 times, between pp. 3-8, 10-18, 20, 23-39.

⁶⁹⁹ *Bar* occurs on pp. 3, 4, 7-9, 14, 24-35, 37, 39, 40.

⁷⁰⁰ *Far* occurs on pp. 8, 15, 28, 37.

⁷⁰¹ *For* occurs on p. 25.

⁷⁰² J. Carmichael Watson, *MU*, 25.

“Who are they?” asked Ailill. (Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 227)

⁷⁰³ J. Carmichael Watson, *MU*, 3.

“Harnesses are the horses, and yoked is the chariot,” said Loeg; “wait not for the evil hour, that thou mayest not be hindered of thy valour. Jump into it when thou likest.” (Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 216)

⁷⁰⁴ J. Carmichael Watson, *MU*, 3.

“This is the welcome of a gift-asking man,” said Cu Chulainn. (Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 216)

⁷⁰⁵ J. Carmichael Watson, *MU*, 8.

“I would find an excellent counsel for you,” said Sencha mac Ailill. (Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 219)

⁷⁰⁶ The form *at-bert* occurs on pp. 8, 11, 12 and 16. All page numbers refer to J. Carmichael Watson, *MU*.

⁷⁰⁷ *At-rubairt* occurs on p. 10. This page number refers to J. Carmichael Watson, *MU*.

⁷⁰⁸ *N-ebairt* occurs on pp. 13 and 39. All page numbers refer to J. Carmichael Watson, *MU*.

⁷⁰⁹ *As-breth* occurs on p. 41. All page numbers refer to J. Carmichael Watson, *MU*.

⁷¹⁰ J. Carmichael Watson, *MU*, 8.

The youth said to Cu Chulainn that “Just when the province is a fountain of desire, thou shouldst be disturbing and spoiling it, for the sake of the exchange of one night.” (Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 219)

⁷¹¹ *At-rubairt*, 3rd. ps. Sg. Ro-pret.

menic i críchaib cíana comaidchi ‘com fhoit 7 ‘com fhorairi.”⁷¹²

Co n-ebairt⁷¹³ Conchobar, “Cía for-indfad dún ca crích ina fuilem?”⁷¹⁴

Is de as-breth⁷¹⁵ Fergus for Tána in so: -
Léic ass Dubt[h]ach nDóeltengad,
Ar cúl int slúaig no-srengaid;
Nocon degéni nach maith;
Ro geogain in n-ingenraith.⁷¹⁶

But for the position it can occupy, it is wholly interchangeable with *ol*.

⁷¹² J. Carmichael Watson, *MU*, 10.

It was then that Cu Chulainn said to Loeg mac Rianga: “Go out, my master Loeg; observe the stars of the air and ascertain when the midnight comes; for often thou hast been watching and waiting for me in far distant countries.” (Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 220)

⁷¹³ 3rd ps. Sg. Preterite.

⁷¹⁴ J. Carmichael Watson, *MU*, 13.

[...] whereupon Conchobar said, “Who will ascertain for us in what territory we are?” (Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 222)

⁷¹⁵ Passive preterite in place of 3 sg. pret., See J. Carmichael Watson, *MU*, 109.

⁷¹⁶ J. Carmichael Watson, *MU*, 41.

It was of him Fergus said thus in the “Cattle-Raid”:

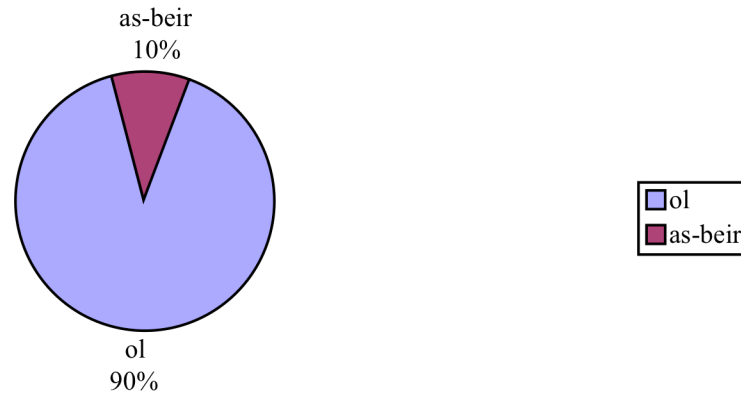
Let off Dubtach Chafertongue,

Behind the host drag him;

No good has he done.

He slew the maiden-band. (Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 235)

VI.3.5 *Echtra Nerai*



Indicator incidence in *Echtra Nerai*

In *Echtra Nerai*, *ol* occurs as *inquit formula* 55 times, with two alternative spellings:

*oll*⁷¹⁷ (6 times) and *or*⁷¹⁸ (3 times):

“Rombirh-si a loug lat,” oll Neroi, “7 ragat himnach.”⁷¹⁹

“Dom taich iss nessum duinn,” or in cimith.⁷²⁰

As-beir occurs 6 times, in 3 different orthographic variants: *ispert*⁷²¹ (3 times), *asbert*⁷²² (once) and *atpert*⁷²³ (once):

Atpert in cimith assin croich fria Nero: Ferdoi sin, a Nero!⁷²⁴

Fertair iarum failte fris 7 ispert: “Fochen det, masso he in rí rofuid ille.”⁷²⁵

⁷¹⁷ *Oll* occurs on pp. 220, 218 (twice), 216 (twice), and 214. Page numbers refer to Kuno Meyer, “EN”.

⁷¹⁸ *Or* occurs on p. 216. Page number refers to Kuno Meyer, “EN”.

⁷¹⁹ Kuno Meyer, “EN”, 214.

“I will have a prize from thee,” said Nera, “and I shall go out.” (Kuno Meyer, “EN”, 215)

⁷²⁰ Kuno Meyer, “EN”, 216.

“To the house which is nearest to us,” said the captive. (Kuno Meyer, “EN”, 217)

⁷²¹ *Ispert* occurs on pp. 226, 224, 218 (twice). Page numbers refer to Kuno Meyer, “EN”.

⁷²² *Asbert* occurs on p. 222. Page number refers to Kuno Meyer, “EN”.

⁷²³ *Atpert* occurs on p. 214. Page number refers to Kuno Meyer, “EN”.

⁷²⁴ Kuno Meyer, “EN”, 214.

Said the captive from the gallows to Nera: “That is manly, o Nera!” (Kuno Meyer, “EN”, 215)

⁷²⁵ Kuno Meyer, “EN”, 218.

The woman bade him welcome and said: “Welcome to thee, if it is the king that sent thee hither.” (Kuno Meyer, “EN”, 219)

Doairthenn Cuculaind in Morrigan cona bain 7 asbert: “Ni berthar ind imerge!” ol Cuculaind.⁷²⁶

Twice, a form of *as-beir* and *ol* are used side by side, functioning as *inquit* in the same sentence (compare the example above):

Dothaet qcco iarum ocus ispert ind rig friuss: “Cid dotucc lasna hocco issin sid?” ol in rig ris.⁷²⁷

It is evident from these examples that *ol* and *as-beir* in any of its forms were used entirely interchangeably, with no implication of any difference in meaning.

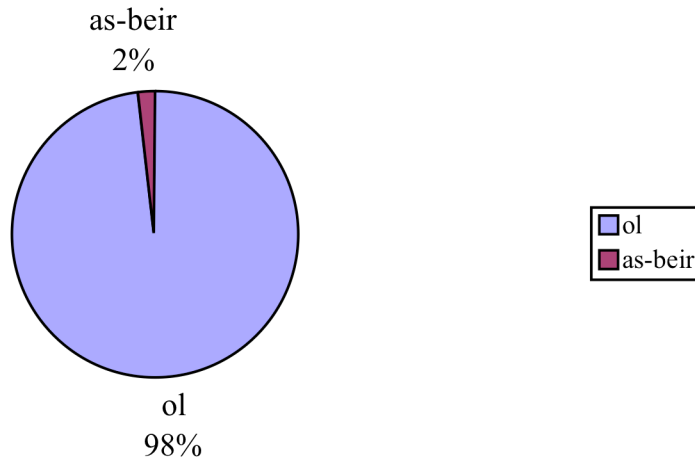
⁷²⁶ Kuno Meyer, “EN”, 222.

Cuchulaind overtook the Morrigan with her cow, and he said: “This cow must not be taken.” (Kuno Meyer, “EN”, 223)

⁷²⁷ Kuno Meyer, “EN”, 218.

The Nera came to them and the king said to him: “What brought thee with the warriors into the sid?” (Kuno Meyer, “EN”, 219)

VI.3.6 *Táin Bó Fraích*



Indicator incidence in Táin Bó Fraích

Táin Bó Fraích is, in terms of *inquit formulae*, even more straightforward than *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*. It uses only two verbs, namely *ol*⁷²⁸ (which accounts for almost all cases, 101 of them to be exact), and *as-beir*,⁷²⁹ which occurs twice. In position, they occur exactly as they do in *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*, *ol* in mid- and final position, *as-beir* in initial position.

“Fróech mac Idaith inso,” *ol* séat.⁷³⁰

“Ní hed is accobor limm,” *ol* Medb, “acht dul do imbirt na fidchille thall fri Fróech.”⁷³¹

⁷²⁸ *Ol* occurs on pp. 2-15. All page numbers refer to Wolfgang Meid, *TBF*.

⁷²⁹ *As-beir* occurs on pp. 12 and 14. All page numbers refer to Wolfgang Meid, *TBF*.

⁷³⁰ Wolfgang Meid, *TBF*, 3.

“Here is Fróech,” said he. (Translation mine.)

⁷³¹ Wolfgang Meid, *TBF*, 4.

“I have no wish,” answered Medb, “but to go and play fidchell with Fróech.” (Jeffrey Gantz, *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, 117)

Asbiurtsa⁷³² frie: “Cía lóg rom bia latt ara fagbáil?”⁷³³

As-beir occurs in two forms, *asbiurtsa* in the above example and *asbertsi*⁷³⁴:

Asbertsi: “Can dúib?”⁷³⁵

It is entirely interchangeable in meaning with *ol*, and also with *dixit*; *dixit*, however, does not occur in *Táin Bó Fraích* at all.

VI.3.7 *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*

The following chart illustrates the *inquit formula* indicator incidence in the Old Irish texts relevant to this thesis, showing the percentages. Once again, all spelling variations of *ol* are treated as a unit.

⁷³² Asbiurt, 1st ps. Sg. Preterite Act.; -sa, an emphatic particle (see Thurneysen, *Grammar*, 252-53).

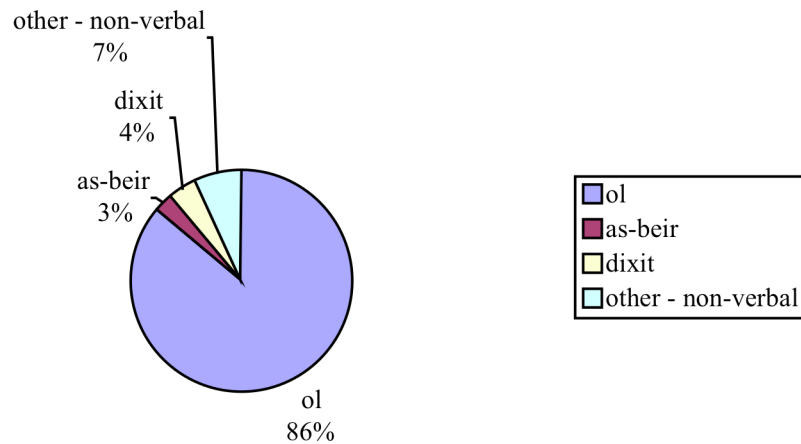
⁷³³ Wolfgang Meid, *TBF*, 12.

[...] and I said to her “What reward will you give me for finding it?” (Jeffrey Gantz, *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, 124)

⁷³⁴ Asbertsi, 3rd ps. Sg. Pret. Act. with a 3 singular feminine emphatic particle (see Thurneysen, 252-53).

⁷³⁵ Wolfgang Meid, *TBF*, 14.

[...] and she said “Whence do you come?” (Jeffrey Gantz, *Early Irish Myths and Sagas*, 125)



Indicator incidence in Scela Mucce Meic Dathó

In *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*, the *inquit formula* occurs with three verbs: *ol*, *as-beir*, and *dixit*. *Ol*⁷³⁶ represents the vast majority of the *inquit formulae* here with 62 examples, while *as-beir*⁷³⁷ and *dixit*⁷³⁸ occur only twice and three times respectively, *dixit* being an obvious influence of Latin on the scribe or author. *Dixit* is used to introduce passages of *rosc*, or at the beginning of a conversation which is principally conducted in *roscada*. *Ol* occurs, like *heb* in *The Four Branches*, with subject in the form of a 3 person form, noun, or a personal name, either in mid-position (flanked by direct speech on either side) or at the end of direct speech:

“Do chungid in chon do-dechammar-ni,” ol techta Connacht, “.i. ó Ailill ocus ó Medb; ocus do-bértar tri fichit cét ilgach hi cétoir ocus carpat ocus da ech bas dech la Connachta, ocus a chommaín cinn bliadna cenmotha sin.”⁷³⁹

⁷³⁶ *Ol* occurs on pp. 2, 3, 5-16, 19. All page numbers are referring to Rudolf Thurneysen, *SMMD*.

⁷³⁷ *As-beir* occurs on pp. 3 and 14. All page numbers are referring to Rudolf Thurneysen, *SMMD*.

⁷³⁸ *Dixit* occurs on pp. 3 and 15. All page numbers are referring to Rudolf Thurneysen, *SMMD*.

⁷³⁹ Rudolf Thurneysen, *SMMD*, 2.

"We have come from Ailill and Medb to beg the hound," said the messengers of Connaught; "and there shall be given three score hundred milch cows at once, and a chariot and two horses, the best in Connaught, and their equivalent gifts at the end of a year in addition to this." (Nora K. Chadwick, *An Early Irish Reader*, 16)

“Mochen dúib,” olse.⁷⁴⁰

As-beir occurs in examples such as:

As-bert Cremthann Nia Náir: ni-tardda do ruin do mnáib.⁷⁴¹

Is and as-bert Cet: ”Fochen Conall, cride lice, londbruth loga, luchair ega, guss flann ferge fo chích curad créchtaig cathbúadaig. At comsa mac Findchoíme frim.”⁷⁴²

There is no difference in meaning between *ol* and *as-beir* detectable either in the text or in the lexical meaning of the verb. The only difference is in the position of the verb: while *ol* occurs in mid- or final position, *as-beir* occurs only in initial position, that is, at the beginning of a sentence. The same is true of *dixit*:

Is and dixit a ben: “Is fota in troscud i-taí. Atá biad lat cenco-n-essara. Cid no-taí?” Nicos-n-arlastar. Is and dixit in ben:
“Tucad turbaid chotulta do Mac Dathó co-a thech,
boíthi ní no-chomairled cenco-labradar fri nech. [...]”⁷⁴³

Dixit here marks the passage as *rosc*, which is often used to denote dialogue or speech.

⁷⁴⁰ Rudolf Thurneysen, *SMMD*, 7.

“Welcome to you,” said he. (Nora K. Chadwick, *An Early Irish Reader*, 18)

⁷⁴¹ Rudolf Thurneysen, *SMMD*, 3.

Crimthann Nia Nair said: “Do not tell your secret to women.” (Nora K. Chadwick, *An Early Irish Reader*, 17)

⁷⁴² Rudolf Thurneysen, *SMMD*, 14.

Then Cet answered:

“Welcome, Conall! Heart of stone,

Fierce glowing mass of fire, brightness of ice,

Red strength of wrath! Under the breast of the hero

Who deals wounds, and is victorious in battle

I see the son of Findchoem before me.” (Nora K. Chadwick, *An Early Irish Reader*, 22)

⁷⁴³ Rudolf Thurneysen, *SMMD*, 3.

Then his wife said to him, “You are making a long fast. There is food beside you but you don’t eat it. What ails you?” He gave the woman no answer, so the woman said: “Sleeplessness fell upon Mac Dathó at his home. There was something upon which he was brooding without speaking to anyone.” (Nora K. Chadwick, *An Early Irish Reader*, 16-7)

As an interesting note, let us consider an ingenious way used five times to indicate the speaker in a dialogue; in four of these five cases, this is actually used instead of the entire *inquit formula*:

[In fer:] As-bert Cremthann Nia Náir: rún mná ní maith con-celar,	ni-tardda do rúin do mnáib. maín ar mug ni-aithenar.
--	---

[In ben:] Cid fri mnaí at-bertha-so ní na<d>-tét do menma-so,	manid-epled ní airi, tėti menma neich aili.
--	--

[In fer:] Cú Mes-Roída meic Dathó do-foeth mór fer find fria rath Manip do Chonchobor berthair nicon-faicébat a slúraig Mad do Ailill <beith> éra dodon-béra mac Mágach	ba olc lathe etha dó; bid lía turim a chath. is derb bid mogda in gním, bas mó do búraig na do thír. silis Fálmag darsin túaith, atan-ebla i luim lúait.
--	---

[In ben:] Táthut airle lim-sa fris tabair dóib-sium dib líraig	ní olc fri íarmairt n-indi cuma cá-thóetsat imbi.
---	--

[In fer:] In chomairle at-biri-siu Ailbe, do-ro<f>oíd Dáa	is <s>í ním-déni cutal nicon-fes cá ó-tucad. ⁷⁴⁴
--	--

[*In ben*] and [*in fer*] are recorded in the margin of LU. It is possible that the copyist was trying to clarify things by using a very unusual, very modern way of solving the problem of identifying different speakers in a fast, complicated exchange of dialogue. Such a way

⁷⁴⁴ Rudolf Thurneysen, *SMMD*, 3-4.

The man: "Crimthann Nia Nair said: 'Do not tell your secret to women.' The secret of a woman is not well kept. A treasure is not entrusted to a slave."

The woman: "Even to a woman you should speak if nothing should be lost thereby. A thing which your own mind cannot penetrate the mind of another will penetrate."

The man: "The hound of Mesroeda Mac Dathó, evil was the day when they sent for it. Many tall and fair-haired men will fall on account of it. The strife about it will be more than we can reckon."

"Unless it is given to Conchobar it will certainly be a churl's act. His hosts will not leave behind them anything more of cattle than of land."

"If it be refused to Ailill (?), he will hew down a heap of corpses (?) across the country. Mac Matach will carry us off, he will crush us into bare ashes."

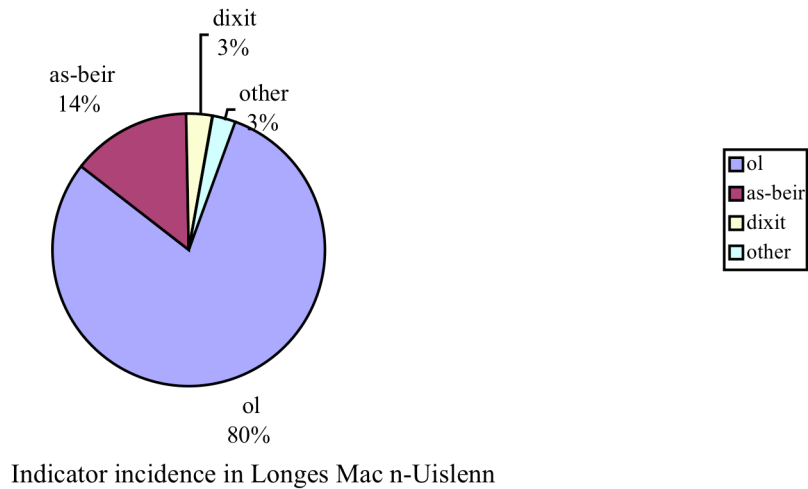
The woman: "I have advice for you about it. I am not bad at directing an affair. Give it to them both. It is all the same who perishes for it."

The man: "The counsel you offer is helpful to me. Ailbe... It is not known by whom it was brought." (Nora K. Chadwick, *An Early Irish Reader*, 17)

would have been inappropriate in an oral tale.⁷⁴⁵ This seems to be a convincing proof of the scribe's thought process in terms of editing: he detected a need for clarification, and, much in the style of later playwrights, inserted the personae who speak without a verbal *inquit formula*.

⁷⁴⁵ For another example of a scribe adding words or phrases in order to clarify things, see Simon Rodway, 'The Red Book Text of «Culhwch ac Olwen»: A Modernising Scribe at Work', *Studi Celtici*, IV (2004) 93-161

VI.3.8 Longes Mac n-Uislenn



Longes mac n-Uislenn presents us with both of the expected Old Irish *ol* and *as-beir*, occurring 28 and 5 times respectively. *Ol*⁷⁴⁶ is rendered *or*⁷⁴⁷ on 7 occasions and *ar*⁷⁴⁸ on four.

“Na cuirid cor díb!” or-se.⁷⁴⁹

“Fír,” ar-se, “ingen fil and ocus bid Derdriu a hainm ocus biaid ole impe.”⁷⁵⁰

“Marbthar ind ingen!” ol ind óic.⁷⁵¹

There is a single occurrence of the Latin *dixit* and a single departure from the traditional expression.

⁷⁴⁶ *Ol* occurs on pp. 43, 45-47, 51. All page numbers refer to Vernam Hull, *LMnU*.

⁷⁴⁷ *Or* occurs on pp. 43, 46, 47, 51. All page numbers refer to Vernam Hull, *LMnU*.

⁷⁴⁸ *Ar* occurs on pp. 44, 45, 51. All page numbers refer to Vernam Hull, *LMnU*.

⁷⁴⁹ Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 43.

"Do not stir," he said. (Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 60)

⁷⁵⁰ Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 44.

"True it is," he said "that a girl is there, and her name will be Derdriu, and concerning her there will be evil." (Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 61)

⁷⁵¹ Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 45.

"Let the girl be slain," said the warriors. (Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 62)

Ro-génair ind ingen íar sin, ocus dixit Cathbad:
 “A Derdriu, maindéra már,
 Dia-msa come-ainech cloth-bán.
 Cesfaitit Ulaid rit ré,
 A ingen fíal Feidlimithe.”⁷⁵²

Once again, *dixit* here introduces a passage of poetry (*rosc*) just like in *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*.

Or and *as-beir* appear side by side once:

Is and as-bert a céile .i. Feidlimid:
 “Cía deilm dremun derdrethar, (‘a ben,’ or-se)
 dremnas fot broinn búredaig?
 Bruit[h] clúasaib cluinethar
 Gloim eter do dá thoib, - trén-tormaid.
 Mór n-úath ad-n-áigethar
 Mo chride créchtnaigedar crúaid.”⁷⁵³

Once again, they are fully interchangeable, equal in meaning and differing only in the positions they can occupy, and seem to be present to reinforce the dialogue. The introduction of direct speech in the stanza that follows the one above, however, is somewhat different:

Is and ro-lá-si⁷⁵⁴ co Cathbath, ar ba fissid side:
 “Cluinid Cathbad come-ainech

⁷⁵² Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 44.

Afterwards the girl was born, and Cathbad said:

"O Derdriu, you will destroy much

If you are comely-faced (and) fair of fame.

The Ulstermen will suffer during your lifetime,

O demure daughter of Feidlimid." (Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 61)

⁷⁵³ Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 43.

Her consort, namely Feidlimid, then said:

"What [is] the violent noise that resounds, ('O woman,' he said)

That rages throughout your bellowing womb?

The clamor between your sides - strongly it sounds -

It crushes him who hears with ears.

My heart fears

Much terror that wounds severely." (Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 60)

⁷⁵⁴ See McCone, *Early Irish Verb*, 134.

Cáin, mál, mind mór mochtaide
 Mbrogthar tre druidechta drúad,
 Ór nad-fil lem féin find-focla
 Fris-mberad Feidlimid
 Fursundud fiss,
 Ar Nád-fitir ban-scál
 Cía fo brú-bí,
 Cid fom chriöl bronn bécestar.”⁷⁵⁵

Vernam Hull’s translation of the relevant line reads,

[t]hereupon she rushed to Cathbad, for he was a seer: [...]”⁷⁵⁶

The OI verb is *fo-ceird* ‘throws’; when followed by a preposition denoting motion such as *co*, its meaning changes (‘go to’).⁷⁵⁷ This is interesting in that the verb here is not one of the *dicendi et sentiendi* group; it is a performative in some of its meanings (‘invite’), yet not all of them. This line functions as an independent sentence in its own right and does not need to introduce direct speech at all. I believe it is there as an indicator of direct speech purely for the purpose of making clear who the speaker is. As such, it cannot be classed as an *inquit formula*.

⁷⁵⁵ Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 43.

Thereupon she rushed to Cathbad, for he was a seer:
 "Hear handsome Cathbad of the comely face,
 A prince, a diadem great [and] mighty,
 Who is magnified through the wizardries of druids,
 Since I myself have not the wise words
 With reference to which Feidlimid might obtain
 The illumination of knowledge,
 Because a woman does not know
 Whatever is wont to be in [her] womb,
 Though it cried out in my womb's receptacle. (Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 61)

⁷⁵⁶ Vernam Hull, *LMnU*, 61.

⁷⁵⁷ See *DIL*, 313, s.v. *fo-ceird* col. 191 ‘hence as intrans. vb. denoting indefinite motion’.

VI.4 Observations

The analysis of the dialogue indicators in medieval Welsh prose texts of *The Four Branches of the Mabinogi* demonstrates that the most commonly used indicator of speech is *heb*, followed by subject, with a few examples of other verbs such as ‘**med*, ‘*dywedyd*, ‘*gouyn*’, *canu* and the phrase ‘*sef attep a rodes*’. *Dywedyd* and *gouyn*, while very rarely used, were used successfully where one would expect *heb*, and *canu* (*englyn*), to replace *heb* by the context. The writer of *Pwyll* and *Branwen* was very much aware of the difference in meaning between *heb* and **med* and he carefully used each verb as appropriate and as he felt would benefit each text by way of adding an additional meaning to the dialogue in places, substituting **med* to indicate that the speaker is quoting someone else’s words or opinion, possibly untruth. This shows very careful work on the part of the author, with great attention to detail. The examples which depart from the pattern of the commonly used *heb* and use **med* instead show that in the case of Welsh prose texts, early beginnings of the editing process were present, and that Welsh literature was well on its way to developing from a purely oral tradition to a written one. Using a verbal *inquit formula* with a nominal phrase to shift the attention of the recipient and to emphasise the importance of the utterance that follows said nominal phrase also shows that the author thought carefully about the effect such an action would have on text perception, and that he was aware of the opportunities offered by text manipulation.

In the selected Irish texts, the most commonly used *inquit* indicator is *ol*, or one of its spelling variations, namely *ar*, *or*, *bar*, *for*, *far*, or *oll*. Many texts show us that several

spelling variations were used side by side without any difference, with the most extreme example being *TBC*, in which all variations occur with the exception of *bar* and *oll*. Such a number of spellings is attributed to changes brought about by the development of the language, and by repeated copying of the texts, which included scribal editing and modernisation of spelling. The other traditional OI *inquit* indicator is the verb *as-beir*, which is not as inflexible as *ol*, and occurs in several different grammatical forms throughout most texts. There is no difference in meaning between *ol* and *as-beir*; the only difference between them regards the position they can occupy in a sentence. *Ol* can occur in mid- and final position, *as-beir* only in initial position before direct speech. *As-beir* is fully interchangeable with the Latin *dixit*, the remnants of which are still present in some texts. When *dixit* is used to introduce a passage of *rosc*, however, they are no longer interchangeable. Perhaps the absence of *dixit* in some of the texts is due to editing on part of some scribes who tried to eliminate Latin influence from the texts. In *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, *dixit* often occurs as a gloss to clarify the OI form. Similarly to alternative verbs in the Welsh texts, there are some fully lexical verbs used instead of the usual *ol* and *as-beir*, such as *canaid*, *fo-cain*, *fo-ceird*, *fris-gair*, *íarmi-foich*, and the phrase *feraid fáilti*. They are entirely interchangeable with the *inquit* formula. An interesting development is shown in *Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó*, where in five cases, the speaker is indicated in a non-verbal way similar to the way used in plays nowadays, giving only the name or noun denoting the character about to speak (*in ben*, *in fer*).

It seems that some editing was present in both Welsh and Irish texts, to a different extent and on different levels. The full extent of editing in the Welsh texts is difficult to

prove due to a very small number of prose texts that have been preserved, but editing was undoubtedly strongly present in the *Four Branches*.

CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the present research, the following comparison of the selected medieval Welsh and Irish narratives emerges, along with some speculations about the profile of the final redactor of the *Four Branches*.

There is a marked difference in the structural organization of the medieval Welsh and Irish narratives in the sample selected for the present research. While most of the medieval Irish narratives seem to present a simpler structure with one or two episodes, a tripartite structure also exists, but does not seem to be the norm. In the case of the *Four Branches*, the tripartite structure seems to be the norm, the requirement imposed on the narratives by the redactor. The Irish narratives appear simpler in structure because they do not contain any sub-episodes, whereas the Welsh ones tend to have numerous sub-episodes in almost every episode. This creates a complex microstructure that seems to have the function of supporting and reinforcing the macrostructure of the narrative. From the way some parts of the microstructure function better than others in some of the Welsh narratives, for example in the third episode of *Branwen* and in the first episode of *Manawydan*, it is obvious that both the macrostructure and the microstructure were superimposed on the narrative not by its original author, but by the final redactor who worked with narratives that were not his own, and who was therefore somewhat limited in terms of creating new material. While it is likely that the redactors of the Irish narratives were not the creators of the narratives examined, they did not seem to be

concerned with macro- and microstructures of the narratives to the same degree as the redactor of the *Four Branches*.

The meticulously organised episodic structure of the Welsh texts examined in this work points to a single final redactor, but does not exclude the possibility of multiple authors. It seems that the same hand edited the texts of the *Four Branches*, but not necessarily the other texts of *The Mabinogion*. The redactor of the *Four Branches* seems to have attempted to control the narratives by giving each of them a strong structure, and to create a certain amount of symmetry between different texts. This suggests that he was probably a master of structure and was very much aware of its power. He seems to have been very concerned with patterns such as tripartite structure and triple repetition/variation that is so obvious especially in *Manawydan* and *Math*. It also seems that he was aware of the flaws of his material, but tried to remedy these flaws by imposing a highly organised structure on the narratives.

The redactor's mastery of structure suggests that he may well have been familiar with Aristotle's *Poetics*, yet at the same time unafraid to disregard some of its postulates when the material he worked with required him to do this. There is no evidence that the redactor had read Aristotle's *Poetics*, however it could be argued that some internal textual evidence, such as the structural organization of the text and the use of some Aristotelian principles, indicates it is very possible that he was familiar with it. Such understanding of literary theory would mean that he must have been a highly intelligent and educated person who was also familiar with the traditional material and lore, and

steered clear of rewriting or adapting non-native material. The redactor seems to have been aware of the Aristotelian demand for a beginning, a middle and an end, yet he also seems to have understood the richness, potential and complexity of the material he was working with, and he seems to have fairly successfully integrated several complete, smaller units of narrative into four larger and more complex units which are now known as the *Four Branches*. He seems to have managed to establish internal connections inside each narrative that connected the smaller units in such a way that each of them became indispensable to the narrative as a whole. The exact degree of the redactor's success in integrating individual smaller units of narrative varied with each narrative, and there seems to be some evidence that some of these smaller episodes (such as for example the first episode of *Manawydan*) of narrative were added by the redactor in an attempt to strengthen the structure and make it conform to the overall structure that he planned to impose over each of the narratives to establish a sense of unity and possibly to help establish a literary cycle.⁷⁵⁸ This supports the premise that the *Four Branches* as preserved are a literary creation rather than a preservation of orally transmitted material.

The Irish narratives seem generally to follow the Aristotelian principle of a beginning, a middle and an end; with one exception, namely that of *Longes Mac n-Uislenn*, they do not seem to be overly concerned with making the elements of the microstructure support the macrostructure to such a degree. Indeed, in most of the narratives included in the sample, the microstructure seems to be somewhat absent, or better, seems to have a somewhat different function. Both narratives with two episodes, *Echtra Nerai* and *Táin Bó Fraích* lack sub-episodes and seem to contain different

⁷⁵⁸ As suggested by Ian Hughes, "The King's Nephew", 56.

narratives that are rather loosely connected. *Táin Bó Fraích* seems to show more editing, if Thurneysen's and Meid's theory about the *táin* part of the narrative belonging to a different Fróech-tradition is correct. This editing, however, is not so meticulous as to conceal some major discrepancies between the episodes from the reader, or to establish such a connection between the two episodes that they would be viewed as essential component parts of the narrative as a whole, joined in such a way that would not cause a certain amount of confusion on the part of the reader. The episodic division of *Echtra Nerai* identified by the analysis of the plot line differs from the one proposed by Rudolf Thurneysen in terms of where the first episode ends and the second one begins; the two episodes seem to be independent of each other and the connection between them is very loose. The reason for that seems to be that the motivation of the redactors of the Irish narratives seems to have been primarily that of preserving the material rather than that of establishing a literary cycle or unity of several narratives within a cycle.

It is possible that the redactor of the *Four Branches*, as well as the redactor of the Irish narratives, may have been using a much less extreme form of what later became known as 'the cut-up technique'.⁷⁵⁹ This is suggested by the slotting together of sub-episodes in the Welsh narratives and numerous embedded tales in the Irish narratives, some of which are sometimes not directly relevant to the rest of the story. The cut-up technique was popularized in the mid-20th century by William S. Burroughs and its very first origins could possibly be traced to Dadaism and collage (beginning of the 20th century). It consists primarily of either cutting up an existing text into smaller units – sentences, phrases, individual words –, which are reassembled in a coincidental and

⁷⁵⁹ For a definition of cut-up, see J. A. Cuddon, *Literary Terms*, 200, 145.

random fashion to form the final text which is then printed; or alternatively by folding a printed sheet of text in various ways until different parts of the text are rearranged on the page. The 20th-century cut-up technique is extreme, sometimes to the point of rendering the text unintelligible. This was not the case with the medieval narratives. The purpose behind the slotting together of different sub-episodes, embedded tales, triads, onomastic tales and similar material seems to have been to increase the aesthetic value of the narrative by making the reader aware of the multiple elements of it, and at the same time to make the narrative as a whole more plausible and coherent. In some cases, the purpose was partly also the preservation of additional material.

The use of embedded tales, or stories-within-stories, shows that the redactor of the *Four Branches* may have been familiar with the technique that later became known as *mise-en-abime*, but possibly still experimenting with it. While frame tales, which are at the very core of *mise-en-abime*, are very common in medieval literature, especially in the form of various dreams, the redactor of the *Four Branches* does not seem to have resorted to the use of embedded tales very often; in fact, he only uses a limited number of embedded stories, two in *Branwen* and one in *Math*, and with a different degree of success. To the modern reader, the two embedded tales in *Branwen* (the story of the cauldron and the story of the five women of Ireland) seem to be too elaborated, almost too independent, too distracting to function successfully as part of the whole; the redactor, however, obviously attempted to make them fit the overall structure of the narrative. The embedded tale in *Math* (the story of Dylan) seems to be the one that shows an awareness of the possibility of this literary device. The use of embedded tales in

the Irish tradition seems to be prolific and popular. It also seems that the use of multiple embedded tales within a narrative was common, and that it seemed to have been intended primarily to preserve as much material as possible.

The use of several techniques and devices which are described as defamiliarization elements in the present thesis demonstrates that at least some, if not most, of the medieval redactors were more than just copyists in the strictest sense of the word. Some of them, for example those who edited some of the medieval Irish narratives, seemed to have felt a sense of responsibility to preserve as much material as they possibly could by incorporating it into existing narratives in the form of embedded tales, onomastic tales and other defamiliarization elements discussed in the present thesis. In some cases, most notably that of *Tochmarc Emire*, the process went so far as to disturb the narrative and make it much more difficult to follow and understand. Some redactors seem to have put some effort into making the different parts joined together function from the point of view of the macrostructure. An example of this is the way the two episodes of *Echtra Nerai* are joined in an attempt to enable the narrative to continue, and the inconsistencies that join the two episodes of *Táin Bo Fraích*. Presuming that there were indeed two Fróech traditions that were joined into a single narrative, one might argue that there is some indication that the redactor felt it necessary to leave out parts of the tradition from which the first episode is taken to accommodate the second episode, namely the part concerning Fróech's death. The ultimate goal the redactor seems to have had here was to harmonize the tale with *Táin Bó Cúailnge* (where Fróech is killed by Cú Chulainn. Some of the material from that tradition was left, however, and seems to hint at

Fróech's death and resurrection, thus causing some confusion as to its purpose and as to the coherence that would make the text semantically meaningful in its entirety. The redactor of the *Four Branches* seems to have concentrated more on the flow of the narrative than on the preservation of additional material, and to have put greater emphasis on the coherence of the narrative. Indeed, where his narratives fail in terms of coherence, it is hardly noticeable – or rather, it is only noticeable when one studies the four narratives together as a cycle and concentrates on deconstructing the narratives in terms of their relationships to other narratives within, as well as outside, the cycle. Only a handful of such flaws in coherence are present, such as for example the age of Pendaran Dyfed in different branches.

The incidence, arrangement and length of the defamiliarization elements examined in the present thesis, namely the triads, onomastic tales, proverbs, embedded tales, poetry/*roscada*, taboos/*cynneddfau/geasa* and lists indicates that the redactors in the two traditions operated on different agenda, or principles. The references to the 'additional material' and other defamiliarization devices in the *Four Branches* seem to be used in the narrative in order to lend a sense of authority to it, as well as perhaps adding just a hint of pride in the extensive knowledge the redactor had, which is partly the reason for the short references and explanations offered. The reason for that also seems to be a keen awareness that substantial tangents and prolonged interruptions to the flow of the narrative would have a negative effect on the structure and thus on the unity of the cycle. In both traditions, the defamiliarization elements have a certain aesthetic value, yet this value seems to be more openly emphasized and less understated in the Irish narratives.

The defamiliarization elements in the medieval Irish tradition seem to be arranged with less attention to the structure of the narrative and to the way in which their arrangement affects the structure and the flow of the narrative. They tend to be more numerous and often occur in large clusters, rendering the narrative more difficult to follow, at least according to the modern dictates of Shklovsky's "Art as Device". From this point of view, the Irish redactors seem to have been far ahead of their time, as well as extremely modern; this, however, seems to be the effect of their striving to preserve vast amounts of additional material without abbreviating it, or only referring to it.

It seems that the redactor of the *Four Branches* was aware of the importance of titles. The titles only appear at the end of each narrative, as if to draw attention to the fact that each individual tale belongs to a larger system, namely the cycle of the Mabinogi. The cycle seems to be of greater importance to the editor than individual titles within the cycle. With the exceptions of *Manawydan*, which contains an alternative title ('Mabinogi Mynweir a Mynord'), motivated by an onomastic story, and *Branwen*, which contains a line that can be interpreted as an alternative title ("A hynny a dyweit y kyuarwydyd hwnn eu kyfranc wy. "Y gwyr a gychwynwys o Iwerddon," yw hwnnw."),⁷⁶⁰ the only functions of the titles are that of inclusion into the cycle and that of establishing each text as a unit in its own right. It seems that the redactor was aware of the importance of titles as well as of the perils of giving his texts potentially misleading titles. The Irish narratives have titles that are known from the preserved bardic lists of tales, yet the titles are often rather unconnected to the stories, if not downright misleading. Such an example is *Scéla Mucce*

⁷⁶⁰ Ifor Williams, *PKM*, 47.

And that is how the story goes: their tale is called "The Men who Set Out from Ireland." (Sioned Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 34)

Meic Dathó, which concerns the fate of Mac Dathó's hound rather than his pig. *Táin Bó Fraích* is largely about the wooing of Findabair, with the cattle raid taking place only in the second episode of the narrative. In the Irish tradition, titles also often seem to be used with the intention of giving the tale its direction, which was important for the audience, and of providing the classification of the tale, which was important for the *fili*.

The use of titles, combined with the attempts to create a structural unity of the narratives, suggests that the redactor of the *Four Branches* was primarily concerned with the creation of a cycle, as opposed to preservation of the existing material. This in turn suggests that he may have had some knowledge of a tradition where the structural unity of narratives was undermined perhaps by numerous and lengthy interruptions caused by elements such as the defamiliarization elements he used himself, which the redactor may have taken as a negative example when constructing the narratives of the *Four Branches*. It seems that he was very careful to choose titles that commit each tale to the cycle rather than disclose its direction.

It seems possible that the redactor of the *Four Branches* was attempting to pioneer a literary genre new to Wales, namely that of a prose cycle. That would put him ahead of his time regarding the literary achievement in Wales, as well as make him a highly inventive and imaginative artist who was not imitating any foreign tradition, but rather taking an idea and adapting it to his material.

The fact that there is very little reference to the existence of the *Four Branches* in any other preserved texts of the period, be it prose or poetry, which hints at the possible unpopularity of the tales or of prose as a genre, suggests that the redactor does not seem to be making efforts with prose to please a patron, but rather to please himself. That in turn raises the questions regarding his financial situation and employment, both of which are unknown and would take us into the realm of speculation.

The redactor of the *Four Branches* seems to have been aware of potential audience and capable of adopting the perspective of the audience rather than being limited only to the artist's point of view. Whether or not he depended on his audience is, again, pure speculation. He may have been aware that he was breaking new literary ground, perhaps even hoping for some recognition at some point in the future. The structure he created so carefully seems to have been for the benefit of the audience more than for the benefit of a possible performer. The Irish narratives, on the other hand, are more *fili* oriented, concerned with preserving the material and not with the audience. Unlike the *Four Branches*, they seem to presuppose a certain amount of prior knowledge relating to the characters and their circumstances.

The redactor of the *Four Branches* seems to have made a conscious attempt to cross-reference his own prose work (namely other narratives in the cycle), which can be interpreted as early attempts at self-conscious prose (metafiction); there are few cross-references to other prose works of the period (perhaps due to the lack thereof, or because they were not part of his cycle). There are references to the Laws of Hywel Dda and to

Triads, and also possible cross-references to the Irish literary culture in general, such as the reference to the iron house. The cross-references to other works in the Irish narratives seem to be more common and in some cases very subtle almost to the point of being impossible to prove. However, some medieval Irish narratives that were not included in the sample that was examined for the purpose of the present thesis seem to exhibit an unexpectedly high degree of self-consciousness. This aspect is well worth examining on a much larger scale in the future.

APPENDIX A: Plot line graph of *Culhwch ac Olwen*

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Mark on the horizontal axis	Event
A Exposition	Cilydd son of Celyddon Wledig wants Goleuddydd daughter of Anlawdd Wledig for his wife. While pregnant, Goleuddydd goes mad and avoids human dwellings; she gives birth where pigs are tended (her senses return then). When the swineherd takes the boy to court, the boy is named Culhwch and given to fostering. Goleuddydd falls ill and asks her husband not to look for a new wife until a double-headed briar has grown on her grave. She instructs the chaplain to clean her grave every year so that nothing will grow it.
B	After seven years, the chaplain neglects his promise; the king sees the briar and takes counsel regarding a new wife. With his men, he abducts the wife of King Doged (and her only daughter), killing the king and taking his land.
C Inciting moment	One day, she goes for a walk and asks a hag about the children of her abductor. She is told that he does not yet have an heir, but might have one by her, since it has been prophesied that he will have an heir. She confronts the king and Culhwch is brought to court. She swears a destiny on him that he shall never strike against a woman until he gets Olwen daughter of Ysbaddaden Bencawr. Upon hearing this, he immediately falls in love with her.

D	<p>The king advises Culhwch to go to Arthur's court. Arriving at Arthur's court, he is stopped by the gatekeeper, who refuses to open the gate. After Culhwch has issued a threat to bring dishonour upon Arthur, give the gatekeeper a bad name and cause all pregnant women to miscarry and all other women to become barren, the gatekeeper reports the matter to Arthur and is ordered to open the gate. Arthur trims Culhwch's hair, recognizes him as a cousin and promises he can have anything he desires.</p>
E	<p>Culhwch asks Arthur to get him Olwen, and invokes his gift in the name of Arthur's warriors.</p>
F	<p>Arthur, who has never heard of Olwen, sends messengers to search for her. After a year, they return without any information about her.</p> <p>Following Culhwch's threat to leave and bring dishonour to Arthur, Cai asks him to come with the men and promises never to be parted from him until the maiden is found, or until Culhwch admits that she does not exist. Arthur calls on several men and they go to seek the maiden.</p>
G	<p>They travel until they see a man is tending a huge flock of sheep. The man is Custennin son of Mynwyedig, Ysbaddaden Bencawr's brother, whom Ysbaddaden Bencawr ruined because of Custennin's wife. He warns them that no one who has come for Olwen has ever left Ysbaddaden's court alive. Culhwch gives him a gold ring. Custennin's wife recognizes Culhwch as her nephew when she is told about him.</p> <p>When Arthur's men come, she greets them joyfully. In her house, she lets her last son out of a coffer where she hides him from Ysbaddaden, who</p>

	has killed her other sons. She advises the men to leave before they are seen; they refuse to leave until they have seen the maiden.
H	She tells them that Olwen comes every Saturday to have her hair washed, and agrees to send for her if the men promise not to harm the maiden. Culhwch tells her of his love for her. She refuses to come with him without consulting her father.
I	They go to the fort, kill the nine gatekeepers and go to the hall where they ask Ysbaddaden for Olwen. He asks them to return tomorrow to get an answer of some sort, and hurls a poisoned stone spear after them. Bedwyr catches it, hurls it back and pierces his kneecap. The next day, the men return to the hall and ask for Olwen again. Ysbaddaden wants to consult with Olwen's four great-grandmothers and great-grandfathers who are still alive. As the men are on their way out, he throws the second poisoned spear at them. Menw son of Teirgwaedd catches it and hurls it back, piercing him through the chest. On the third day, the men warn him not to throw any more spears at them. Ysbaddaden, however, hurls the third poisoned spear at them. Culhwch catches it and pierces Ysbaddaden's eye with it.
J	On the fourth day, Ysbaddaden sets Culhwch a number of tasks that he needs to fulfil in order to get Olwen. ⁷⁶¹
K	The narrative describes how they accomplish several of the tasks given to

⁷⁶¹ Ysbaddaden sets Culhwch forty tasks, which shall not be listed here partly due to the constraints of space and time. For a list and interpretation of the tasks set, see for example Doris Edel, *Helden auf Freiersfüßen*, Amsterdam, Oxford, New York, 1980, 176 ff.

	Culhwch by Ysbaddaden, as well as some additional tasks that were not specified previously. The narrative as preserved does not describe the fulfilment of all of the tasks; however, it is implied that all of the tasks are fulfilled.
L Climax	Culhwch, Gorau son of Custennin, and the men who wish harm to Ysbaddaden, go to Ysbaddaden's court. Caw of Prydyn shaves the giant. Olwen is given to Culhwch; Ysbaddaden is killed by Gorau son of Custennin.
M Dénouement	Olwen is Culhwch's only wife for as long as he lives. Arthur's men return to their respective countries.

APPENDIX B: A note on the censorship of the Slovenian translation of *Math*

As mentioned in Chapter IV, the translation of *The Mabinogion* into Slovenian (Maja Kraigher-Žaucer, *Harfa na vodi: waleške pravljicne pripovedi*, Ljubljana, 1980) contains a censored version of *Math*, which omits the first episode of the narrative entirely, without causing any obvious damage to the narrative for the reader who is unfamiliar with *Math* as it appears in the Welsh original or in any uncensored translations. Judging by the colophon, *Harfa na vodi: waleške pravljicne pripovedi* appears to be an adaptation of the 1949 English translation *The Mabinogion* by Thomas Jones and Gwyn Jones. The volume, with an introduction by Mitja Meršol, contains no explanation for that, nor any mention that an omission was made either by the translator or by the publisher. To any reader who is familiar with the uncensored and unabridged version of *The Mabinogion*, this obviously raises the question of why such an omission was made.

While it is very inviting to make a judgement based on the political situation of the time in the former Yugoslavia, which Slovenia used to be part of, my personal belief is that to do so would be a case of not seeing the forest for the trees. It is true that Yugoslavia, and therefore Slovenia and all other Yugoslav republics had censorship in place, which could be applied to any book or translation, and editors indeed had the authority to censor whole books or parts of them if they were deemed politically or ideologically unsuitable. However, political censorship applied mostly to matters

connected with religion and sympathising with the West, which was viewed as undesirable and potentially exciting internal unrest and dissatisfaction.

The translation of the Mabinogion was and still is classified as a children's storybook; libraries invariably shelved it in the children's section on the shelf dedicated to fairytales of the world. It was published as one of the many books in the series *Zlata ptica* ('The Golden Bird'), which is a known series of children's stories and fairytales. Children's books were not generally censored much in terms of political acceptability, with the exception of excessive inclusion of the religious component of life, but rather in terms of what was deemed suitable for children of a certain age. Fairytales have always been marketed to young children, and while a number of them tend to contain acts of violence and cruelty (the Brothers Grimm tales, for example, almost always contain an element of violence), there are certain aspects of violence that tend to be kept secret from children and tend to remain unknown to them until there is a tragedy in the community or they are old enough to hear about it in the media. Sexual violence (and deviance) is certainly one of them, and it is highly likely that that was the reason for the omission of the first episode of the Fourth Branch.

Were it not for the rape of Goewin, which is described so clearly that it cannot be mistaken or disguised as anything else,⁷⁶² I believe the first episode would have been included in the translation. The bestiality between Gwydion and Gilfaethwy, and the gender transgression incest are not detailed or direct enough for a child, and indeed most

⁷⁶² This is partly due to the problem of language: there is no way to render a phrase like 'she was lain with against her will' (used in the Thomas Jones and Gwyn Jones translation, p. 53) into Slovenian (and probably most other languages) without making it absolutely clear to the reader that the topic is rape.

adults, to notice and recognise as such. Changing shape from human to animal and back is a common occurrence in fairytales, and seems to be viewed as a separate part of a character's life. Rape, however, especially when described so directly as the forcing of a man on a woman, is not a matter that occurs in fairytales. In medieval Wales, *The Mabinogion* was not intended as (bedtime) stories for children, but stories for adults, who would be well familiar with the concept of rape at least in theory; it was a daily possibility for some (especially lower) sections of society, and while perhaps it cannot have added to the popularity of the *Four Branches*, it was certainly acceptable enough to be included.

As for the religious component and its influence on 'censorship' regarding the translation of (children's) books, a good example is the Slovenian translation of *Heidi*, in which Heidi and Clara's discussion of God and his ways are omitted for political/cultural reasons. While Heidi is a deeply religious character almost throughout the story, the only part relating to God that was censored in the translation was the one mentioned above, partly because of the political situation in the former Yugoslavia, partly because most of the children would not have been able to relate to such matters due to discouragement (by the government of the time) to practise religion. It was certainly not common practice to remove every reference to God or religion; for example, Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* contains several references to God, prayers, sermons and services, and a grace before meal, none of which was omitted or changed in translation.

Sioned Davies touches on the difficulties and dilemmas of translating literary works in her article “A charming Guest: translating the *Mabinogion*”.⁷⁶³ She discusses the problems of transferring the meaning of the text, be it prose or poetry, into the target language in such a way that the reader does not notice the text is a translation, and the perils of the translator sticking too rigidly to the idiom and expression of the source language.

Translating, like editing, is a manipulatory process- the translator decodes and recodes. As emphasized by Susan Bassnett-McGuire, the translator is doing more than the reader of the source language text alone – he/she is approaching the text through more than one set of systems. Also, of course, when a text belongs to a cultural system distanced in time from our own, there are further complications, for example the significance of the text and its context is often unknown, without research, while etymological expertise is also needed. The interlingual translator is, therefore, bound to reflect the translator’s own interpretation of the source language text, determined largely by the concept of the function both of the translation and of the original text. Indeed, one could argue that there is no single right way of translating a text.⁷⁶⁴

The success of a translation partly also depends on the target readership. Lady Charlotte Guest, working on her translation of *The Mabinogion*, also had children in mind when she translated the narratives and dedicated the translation to her two eldest children. Her translation also “omits certain passages which she probably felt would be too indelicate for a young audience.”⁷⁶⁵

Donna R. White⁷⁶⁶ discusses another example of censorship of *The Mabinogion*, this time in the United States of America. Sidney Lanier’s edition, *The Boy’s Mabinogion* (1881), was based on Lady Guest’s translation. *The Boy’s Mabinogion* contains the

⁷⁶³ Sioned Davies, “A charming Guest: translating the *Mabinogion*”, *SC* XXXVIII (2004), 157-178.

⁷⁶⁴ Sioned Davies, “A charming Guest”, 164-65.

⁷⁶⁵ Sioned Davies, “A charming Guest”, 165.

⁷⁶⁶ Donna R. White, *A Century of Welsh Myth in Children’s Literature*, Westport, Connecticut, London, 1998.

narratives in a different order than Lady Guest's translation, and even with different titles, for example 'The Origin of the Owl' instead of "Math the Son of Mathonwy".⁷⁶⁷ Lanier omitted certain phrases and whole parts of the narratives, including any references to marriage and sexuality. At Lanier's hands, *Math* suffered even more censorship than at the hands of the Slovenian editor or translator: not only did Lanier omit the part of the narrative relating the rape of Goewin, the death of Pryderi and the punishment of Gwydion and Gilfaethwy; he also obscured the relationship of mother and son between Ararhod and Lleu, and consequently also the motivation behind Aranrhod's actions. He also omitted any reference to Blodeuedd's affair with Gronw, as well as description of Lleu in the form of an eagle in the tree.

As I have tried to demonstrate with these examples, *The Mabinogion* has been censored in several translations and adaptations, and the reason for such censorship always seems to be the (somewhat wrongly identified) target audience or personal sensitivities of the translator or editor. The lack of background knowledge and scholarship in countries where the access to publications on medieval Welsh literature is limited (or was, at the time of the translation, non-existent), adds to the problem significantly.

⁷⁶⁷ For details, see Donna R. White, *A Century*, 16-17.

ABBREVIATIONS

AOA	A. G. Van Hamel (ed.), <i>Aided Óenfir Aife</i> ; in <i>Compert Con Culainn and Other Stories</i> , Dublin, 1968.
BL	The British Library
BM	The British Museum
BBCS	<i>Bulletin Board of Celtic Studies</i> , 1921-
CCC	A. G. Van Hamel (ed.), <i>Compert Con Culainn</i> ; in <i>Compert Con Culainn and Other Stories</i> , Dublin, 1968.
CMCS	<i>Cambridge Medieval Celtic Studies</i> , 1981-1993; <i>Cambrian Medieval Celtic Studies</i> , 1993-
DIL	<i>Dictionary of the Irish Language</i>
EC	<i>Etudes Celtiques</i> , 1936-
Ed.	Edinburgh
Eg.	Egerton
EN	Kuno Meyer (ed.), “The adventures of Nera: Echtra Nerai”, <i>RC 10</i> (1889), 212-28
GPC	<i>Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymru</i> , Caerdydd, 1950-
HA	Harley
LL	The Book of Leinster
LMnU	Vernam Hull (ed.), <i>Longes Mac n-Uislenn: The Exile of the Sons of Uisliu</i> , New York, London, 1949.
MU	J. Carmichael Watson (ed.), <i>Mesca Ulad</i> . Dublin, 1941
NLW	National Library of Wales
PKM	Ifor Williams (ed.), <i>Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi</i> , Caerdydd, 1950.
Rawl.	Rawlinson
RC	<i>Revue Celtique</i> , 1870-1934
RIA	The Royal Irish Academy
SC	<i>Studia Celtica</i> , 1966-
SMMD	Rudolf Thurneysen (ed.), <i>Scéla Mucce Meic Dathó</i> , Dublin, 1986
TBC	<i>Táin Bó Cúailnge</i> (any edition)

TBF	Wolfgang Meid (ed.), <i>Táin Bó Fraích</i> , Dublin, 1974
TCD	Trinity College, Dublin
TE	A. G. Van Hamel (ed.), <i>Tochmarc Emire</i> ; in <i>Compert Con Culainn and Other Stories</i> , Dublin, 1968.
THSC	<i>Transactions of the Honorable Society of the Cymmrodorion</i> , 1892/3-
TYP	Rachel Bromwich (ed.), <i>Trioedd Ynys Prydein</i>
YB	<i>Ysgrifau Beirniadol</i> , 1965-
YBL	Yellow Book of Lecan
ZCP	<i>Zeitschrift für Celtische Philologie</i> , 1896-

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CELT – Corpus of Electronic Texts	http://www.ucc.ie/celt/
Irish Script on Screen	http://www.isos.dias.ie/
Leabhar na hUidre	http://www.ria.ie/library/special-collections/manuscripts/leabhar-na-huidre.aspx
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Medieval Celtic Manuscripts	http://www.digitalmedievalist.com/urls/celtmss.html
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CELT – Corpus of Electronic Texts	http://www.ucc.ie/celt/
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	All Titus texts accessed February 23, 2007; the links seem to have changed.
Titus texts: <i>Branwen</i>	http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/celt/mcymr/pkm/pkm002.htm

Titus texts: <i>Manawydan</i>	http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/celt/mcymr/pkm/pkm003.htm
Titus texts: <i>Math</i>	http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/celt/mcymr/pkm/pkm004.htm
Titus texts supplements	http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/celt/mcymr/pkm/pkm005.htm http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/celt/mcymr/pkm/pkm006.htm http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/celt/mcymr/pkm/pkm007.htm http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/celt/mcymr/pkm/pkm008.htm
The White Book of Rhydderch	http://www.llgc.org.uk/?id=256&L=1